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No. 89

OCTOBER '96

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OCTOBER 1996 Vol. 9, No. 10



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**AFTER HEIHACHI WAS DEFEATED IN THE FIRST TEKKEN
TOURNAMENT, HIS RIVALS THREW HIM OFF A CLIFF.**

THEY SHOULD HAVE FOUND A STEEPER CLIFF.



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COVER STORY

Fighting games have come a long way, and they're about to take another giant step this fall. In our exclusive report, we explore the new features that will change the way we play forever. Oh, and there's a few new *Virtua Fighter 3* pics thrown in for good measure...

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THE NEW FIGHTING GAMES

REVIEWS

SPORTSLINE

PREVIEWS

ALL ACCESS

NETWORK

WIN

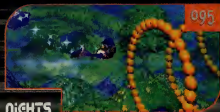
street fighter alpha 2 arcade!

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In our new **ULTRA GP GameShop** section, you'll find loads of super-cool prizes, including your very own *Street Fighter Alpha 2* arcade machine! You can also try your hand at snagging a PlayStation, Saturn, Nintendo 64, and lots, lots more!



NEWS



NIGHTS



DESTRUCTION DERBY 2



MADDEN '97

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The most detailed and accurate game reviews anywhere

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MARIO 64 TIPS

Missing a star? Maybe you'll find it in our Mario hints & tips.



ONLINE GAMING

Online multiplayer gaming is booming fast. Are you wired?



FINAL FANTASY VII



QUAKE



TUROK



EDITOR CHRIS SLATE

Why? Why completely change a magazine when it already has scores of loyal readers? Why change when you're racing by the competition in terms of both commercial and critical success? Why change when the editorial is already well-respected for its quality and integrity? Why? Because even though we had plenty to be happy about, we just weren't satisfied. We felt that we could still improve in almost every area, and we've never been ones to shy away from a challenge.

The world of videogames has changed remarkably over the years. Each new genera-

tion has taken us places we never imagined possible, and this generation, with its 32- and 64-bit consoles, is the most exciting ever. We're playing new types of games, so it only makes sense that we offer a new type of videogame magazine. Simply stuffing 32- and 64-bit coverage in the old 16-bit format just doesn't cut it.

Also, you won't find biased opinions, scandals, or bought editorial in *ULTRA Game Players*. Our philosophy has, and always will be, reader first. Let's face it — without you guys, we're nothing. We'll never do anything to compromise our relationship.

Drop me a line with your thoughts on the new *GP*. I can't respond to everyone, but I promise that I will read every message. Now let's get this thing going!

>>> C.S.

THE TEAM



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Chris cut his teeth on Atari, but the NES changed his life. After seven years of 'hard' work, he's proud to be Editor of the world's best videogame magazine.



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When he's not walking the gaming districts of Japan or testing out the latest coin-op, Patrick is busy planning features and interviewing the industry's top guns.



roger burchill

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No game's secrets are safe from Rog. As our top strategy editor, he searches the world over for the best codes and tips. He's also become quite fond of RPGs.



mike salmon

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One of the top sports videogame experts in the field, Mike also enjoys racing or fighting action. This is one sports reviewer who can also compete off the couch.



bill donohue

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Bill's the one that holds it all together. He craves flight sims, especially ones that involve lots of high-gee maneuvers and 'waxing the tail off some bad guys.'

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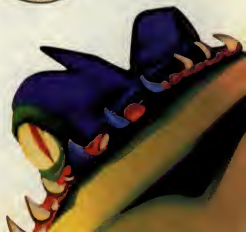
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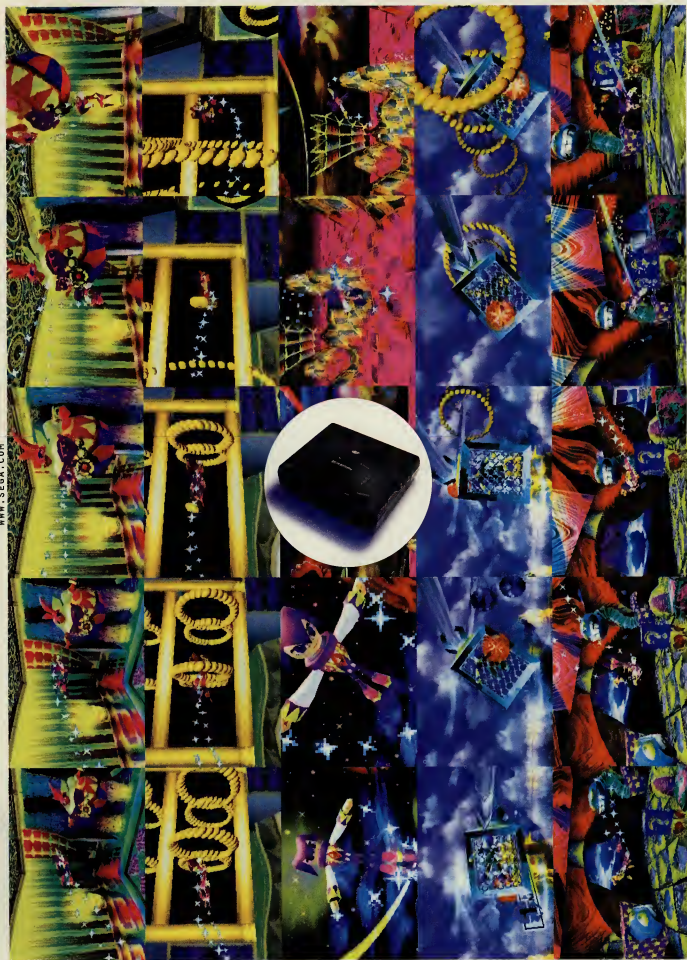
(and soar and spin and climb and dive and look way, way down on everything else)

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THE WORLD

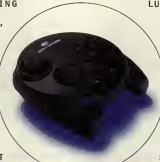
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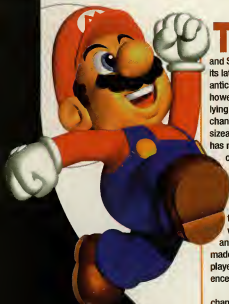


SEGA SATURN



Who's Afraid of Big Bad Nintendo?

The N64 is finally ready, but so are Sony and Sega...



The last time Nintendo released a new hardware platform, Sega was still perfecting 'Blast Processing', and Sony was enjoying the success of its latest Walkman series. The highly-anticipated release of the Nintendo 64, however, finds a very different market lying in wait, with the most significant change being the PlayStation's rather sizeable presence. In the past year, Sony has maintained a clear lead over all competitors, including industry veteran, Sega.

Nintendo is also now faced with a newer, older generation of gamers. The kids that first bought the NES have taken the industry with them well into their late teens and mid-twenties. Can Nintendo, who made its fortune catering to younger players, sell the N64 to an older audience?

So then, does Nintendo stand a chance? We talked with Sony's Vice President of Marketing, Andrew House, and Sega's Group Director of Corporate Communications, Lee McEnary, to find out — why they think — the N64 will ultimately fail.

The Technology

It was this year's E³ when the US market finally got its first look at the N64, and it was also the first opportunity for everyone to really compare it to the PlayStation and Saturn. Andrew House wasn't impressed, 'Speaking as a gamer, I don't see a great deal of difference. I think the key factor here is that we can't view the hardware as a box. The proof is the games that will be delivered on it. The fact of the matter is that, going into this Christmas, we're going to have 200, we believe, very great games around on PlayStation.'

There is little doubt that the Nintendo 64 is a strong piece of hard-

ware, but according to Lee McEnary, 'It's the *wrong* hardware' (in reference to the cartridge format). 'High costs of goods is going to hurt their third party development. We're (speaking of the entire industry) not in fabulous, fabulous shape. So is a company going to lock-up a lot of cash in buying ROM?' House agrees, 'Having seen two major companies come in and elect to choose CD ROM as the obvious format for next-generation gaming, it's been a big surprise to see somebody, in our view, take a step back and still insist on going with the cartridge. We feel the consumers have made their choice in the marketplace. The consumers have definitely elected to go for CD in the numbers that they've gone out to buy PlayStation. Also, the gamers have become used to the idea of getting games at a certain price.'

Ah, Mario

Talking about *Super Mario 64*, both companies agree that the game is good, but neither seem to feel that one title is enough.

According to House, 'They're (the consumers) going to look for a variety of games; the next thing they're going to look at is the price of the games. They're going to say 'I'm not just laying out the money for a system here. I'm also going to be asking my parents to keep buying

me games to feed me and to feed this system. That's going to lead them to look very closely at the price of the software that they see coming out.'

Citing a lesson learned the past year, McEnary says, 'In the long run, probably it's too late for Nintendo to win the next generation race.'

'In the long run, probably it's too late for Nintendo to win the next generation race.'

—Lee McEnary,
SEGA

I think people understand the value in libraries. Clearly, Sony won on that point last year.' Neither Sega nor Sony seem to feel any particular threat from upcoming N64 titles, though each opted for a wait-and-see philosophy. House adds, 'They definitely are starting from a very difficult position, not only in terms of the fact that we have been able to establish a great user base, but also in terms of the image that we've been able to build up for PlayStation. We've also got a huge number of people out there who have bought PlayStations, who love the system and tell us that they love the system and who are already telling people around them that they love the system. I think that's a very difficult position to catch up on.'



Nintendo world headquarters in Japan — who knows what's taking place behind these walls?

Sega and Sony Play Musical Executives

Crazy amounts of people are getting fired. Are the 32-bit giants hearing Mario's footsteps?



Jim Whims, formerly of Sony CE

With the Nintendo launch looming on the horizon, it seems that both Sega and Sony have decided that neither company has the right management in its American division to properly enter the fray. To this end, both companies have had

gone through major restructuring.

In the Sega camp, Tom Kalinske, who has been with Sega of America for the last six years and was very instrumental in the success of the Genesis, has left the company to join Educational Systems. Kalinske

1996
NEW

New Market

As for the market's average age and the general shift towards older gamers, McEnany is convinced that Nintendo will remain loyal to the younger gamers. 'They're going to get it (the younger market), but we're going to be there, too.' Sony also has its eye on the younger players and feels with its new \$199 price point (the same as Saturn and \$50 less than N64), they're in a very good position to reach that market. Sega and Sony both hope to take advantage of Nintendo's anticipated momentum by converting those who held-out for the N64 to the PlayStation or Saturn when the N64's limited stock (only 500,000 by their own estimation) runs out before Christmas.

McEnany says, 'Nintendo is not going to bring a full slate of N64s to the market this year. (What they bring) are all going to sell, absolutely, no problem.' To take advantage of N64's limited stock, she adds 'We're doing a lot more "interactives" in stores, which is clearly where Sony kicked our butt last year. Christmas is 85% of our business, so clearly the predicted shortage of N64s is a benefit to us and a mistake for them. You don't want to have someone go to the store for your product and then turn them over to someone else. And that can't not happen.'

Looking Forward

On the upcoming race with Nintendo, each rival camp displays a reverent respect for the industry giant, though there are significant differences in their proposed battle plans when it comes to dealing with Mario and company. Furthermore, neither Sony nor Sega believe that, with limited hardware stock and little third-party software support, there is any way for the N64 to be a real competitor in the next generation console race into mid-next year. House says of Sony's overall battle plan, 'We don't give a tremendous amount of thought to the differences of

our competitors. I think one of the secrets to our success is that we were focused on what we wanted to do with PlayStation and we don't change our plans according to what happens with our competitors.' He adds, 'Nintendo is a very strong company. They have a long heritage, but I would say that their recent moves seem to indicate that they are very much bound-up in those traditions.'

As the only company that knows intimately what it's like to battle with both Sony and Nintendo, McEnany adds, 'Nintendo is not stupid and we have full respect for them as a competitor, but I think Nintendo is trying to lump Sega and Sony together.' When asked with which company she would attend a party, McEnany replies, 'I would go with Nintendo — it's just more fun to piss them off.'

Delays, Delays.

About Nintendo's long hardware release delay, McEnany says 'I would have done exactly the same thing. Let Sony and Sega slug it out, spend some money, burn some cash. We'll save our money until we have something good.' House concurs, 'If you want to deliver a system of quality, then it's right to deliver that system when you feel it's to the quality the marketplace wants and that you're happy with.' Both companies, however, concede that the extra time has been nothing but beneficial to them in their efforts against Nintendo. When asked about the potential for Sega to present any new challenges to Sony's leadership, House says 'We have consistently outlasted Sega and we anticipate that continuing.' Conversely, McEnany offers, 'We're not going to overtake Sony (this year), but we're definitely going to close the gap.'

One thing is for sure — whether Nintendo is able to get enough N64 units into the US this year or not, they're going for broke.

ARCADE FOCUS

Coin-op Industry News...

Don't worry — the new ULTRA GP certainly isn't going to forget about arcade games! This column is going to be here each and every month to serve up all the industry's hottest news and gossip. We'll also be featuring the best titles in previews, and you can look forward to coin-op codes and strategies in All Access.



Rumored
work on the System 33 board could have Tekken characters like Yoshimitsu getting a major overhaul and polygon injection.

Now for this month's column...

As usual, the arcade industry has been quiet since the ACME show, but come the AIMO and IAPPA shows, in September and October respectively, there is going to be plenty to talk about. Games planned to appear include Sega's *Last Bronx* and the awe-inspiring VF3, a new Jet Ski game from Namco, and some big news about Namco's new arcade board. The company is working on the new System 33 board (working title) to surpass its earlier System 11 and System 22. The board is being produced to rival the Sega's powerhouse Model 3 board. Hot titles planned for the new System 33 include

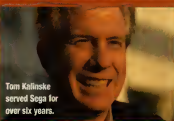
Tekken 3 and a new *Ridge Racer* game. We haven't seen any specs on it yet, but judging from Namco's intense rivalry with Sega, one would expect that Namco would stop at nothing less than the equivalent to the Model 3.

The developers at Capcom still aren't talking about *Street Fighter 3*. All they'll say is that they plan to match and surpass the high mark set by VF3. We have heard, however, that the game may not be 3D after all, but instead the most ambitious 2D fighter ever made — kind of like 'the VF3 of 2D'.

Sega also revealed the second new character from VF3, but other than that, everyone at Sega is still keeping quiet. By next month, we should have further updates on the sequel frenzy that's hitting the market, the prong wars between Namco and Sega, and some previews on more hot arcade games.

Remember that at ULTRA GP, we only cover the arcade games you care about, and we only cover them in-depth. See you in thirty!

Yu Suzuki is just about ready to unleash his VF3 of a world of hungry fans (see page 632 for the latest VF3 screens and information).



Tom Kalinske served Sega for over six years.

jointly with Nintendo. Kalinske has been replaced as chairman and CEO by Shoichiro Irimajiri, who joined Sega in 1993.

To complicate the picture, Bernie Stolar has left Sony Computer Entertainment of America as executive vice president of third-party development to join Sega as executive vice president in charge of

product development and third-party business.

Rounding out Sega's new team for the upcoming Christmas season are: Ted Hoff, former CEO of North American Operations at Atari Corp., who has been promoted to executive vice president in charge of sales and marketing, and Katsufumi Miyazawa, chief financial officer and Makoto Kaneshiro, vice-president, business planning and operations.

Sony has had equally-deep changes in its high-ranking personnel. Since the PlayStation was announced for US release, Sony has been dumping executives every few months. The latest round of cuts eliminated all of SCEA's executive vice presidents. Most notably, Jim Whims, who has been the public face of the company as executive vice president of sales. Similarly, Angelo Pezzani was also asked to resign his position of executive vice presi-

dent of legal affairs.

Jack Trenton will be taking over Whims' position of executive vice president of sales, and Shigeo Maruama, previously chairman, will act as chairman and CEO. Sony has stated that 'it's been a year since we launched the PlayStation in the US and senior management felt that the mix and skills needed now are different in the second year than they were in the first, so we position ourselves for further growth.' Another Sony spokesman went so far as to say that it's typical for Sony to drastically change the shape of its companies overnight.

Both companies have obviously been intimidated by the coming storm, and the corporate honchos in Japan felt that they needed better people at the helm to assure them victory as the next generation wars escalate to the next level this fall.

Options

New ways to enhance the gaming experience

PREMIUM ***
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Designed from the ground up as a videogame-specific television, the GXTV is a pioneering offering from Samsung Electronics that manages to fulfill the needs of a new niche market quite thoroughly.

With a 13" screen and 181-channel tuning capability, the GXTV lives up to competitive color television standards. But what separates Samsung's entry is the plethora of features that enhance the playing of home console videogames. The television tube itself features a burn-in resistant, low-emissions CRT augmented by Graphic Enhancement Circuitry that increases the detail in both the light and dark areas of the picture for greater sharpness and detail. Numerous video presets, including a programmable custom set-

ting, insure a video image that will satisfy widely varying tastes.

The most noticeable enhancement offered by the GXTV is its audio presentation. Adjustable bass-reflex stereo speakers positioned in the unit's doors and a 15 watt sub-woofer, coupled with Surround Sound circuitry, creates sound that rivals some high end television sets. As with the video, the audio also features numerous presets and an option to optimize the sound environment.

In terms of videogame-particular functions, the GXTV offers a GX mode that will automatically switch the game to its gaming setup at the push of a button. Two separate A/V inputs and one RF input allow for easy connection of multiple game systems. All of the numerous control options are programmable on screen via the back-lit remote control unit.

The only complaint may be that the unit is not currently offered with a screen size larger than 13 inches. If the GXTV finds the market it deserves, that complaint will be addressed. But for now, the GXTV offers a bevy of features at a very attractive price.

RATING: ★★ ★

PRODUCT: GXTV
COMPANY: SAMSUNG
SYSTEM: ALL
PRICE: \$279.00 (SRP)

Satum's new 3D Control Pad is inextricably associated with Sega's new flight/adventure game *Nights*, primarily because the analog control offered by the controller works so seamlessly with *Nights*' gameplay. It's just an added bonus that Sega offers a *Nights*/3D Control Pad bundle pack at the appealing suggested retail price of \$69.99.

But even judged separately from *Nights*, the 3D Control Pad can be considered one of the best control pads ever available. Although slightly awkward in appearance, when actually held in the hand, the superior ergonomics of the unit quickly become evident. Access to the left and right shift buttons in particular are improved by a redesign utilizing trigger-like activators on the back of the control pad. A secondary directional pad, located on the face of the controller, works in conjunction with an analog/digital selection switch to allow for use of the unit on non-analog optimized games.

There is little to criticize the 3D Control Pad for because of its versatility. Few games at the moment, besides *Nights* and some racing games, take advantage of the analog capabilities of the controller, but it is reasonable to expect Sega to support the control pad more extensively in the future. Hardware-wise, the looseness of the digital directional-pad, the ABC and the XYZ buttons could be cause for some grumbling, but overall the unit feels more substantial than the current standard Saturn control. The ultimate complaint about the 3D Control Pad is that it's not already the pack-in controller for the Sega Saturn.

Quake Buries Needle on the Richter Scale

id has launched the shareware version of its ground-breaking sequel to *Doom*

Tens of thousands of people waited anxiously, checking id's FTP site every few seconds for the elusive shareware version of *Quake* to be uploaded for the world to receive. Within moments of release, id's servers and all of the mirror sites were completely packed with would-be downloaders.

'The level of excitement here at id is incredible', said Jay Wilbur, CEO and biz guy at id Software. 'The wait was well worth it... *Quake* will change the face of gaming forever.'

id's servers were capable of handling more than 2,000 simultaneous connections and it has been stated that it was operating at capacity for more than a week. Similar levels of usage

were seen at more than fifty mirror sites, as literally never-before-seen loads were placed upon the infrastructure of the Internet. Adding to the strain, *Quake* has built-in Internet networking support, whereby players can set up *Quake* servers to host games on any machine connected via the standard TCP/IP protocol.

The full game will have music and sound effects by Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor, and should be shipping by the time you read this. Interestingly enough, id will be publishing the title itself and distributing it in a rather unorthodox manner. The demo discs will be sold not only in typical gaming retail outlets, but also records stores, video rental chains and larger

department stores, like Walmart and K-mart. The demo will then have a phone number for consumers to call and register their copies, after which they will receive a code to unlock the rest of the disc. The demo includes the first episode of the massive title, and registration unlocks an additional three episodes, as well as exposing a new weapon and more monsters.

No PC game has ever been hotter than *Quake*.





RATING: ★★
PRODUCT: 3D CONTROL PAD
COMPANY: SEGA
SYSTEM: SATURN
PRICE: \$39.99 (SRP)
 \$69.99 NIGHTS BUNDLE PACK

Crystal

Bows Out of Publishing

Now what will happen to Pandemonium and Kain?

After taking a slight beating in the next generation publishing wars, Crystal Dynamics is looking to regroup by negotiating deals with other publishers over its valuable titles.

It can be said that 1995 was not a kind year for many publishers in the next-generation console market, and Crystal Dynamics was no exception. After numerous layoffs in both marketing and development, Crystal Dynamics has decided that it would be better served to leave the headaches and costs of distribution (and possibly marketing) to someone else, and to return to the vaunted developer status it once held.

Said newly appointed CEO, Ted Ardell, "We're looking at being primarily a studio, but that's not to say that we won't be co-publishing in some form or another. The products we have for Christmas are very sought after."

Crystal Dynamics is currently talking to many large publishers, including Sega, Sony, MGM Interactive and Electronic Arts, about its latest titles. On the bargaining table is the long-awaited RPG, *Legend of Kain*, as well as *3D Baseball*, and the hyperactive *Pandemonium*. Crystal Dynamics has not signed any deals as yet, and still may wind up publishing existing projects itself if it can not work out an advantageous arrangement. Ardell put it this way:

"Even if we publish our own games in the future, we are not going to attempt to have a million SKUs. In order to focus on creating the kinds of quality games as shown by us at E3, we can not do as many [titles]."

Crystal Dynamics is just the latest in a long line of publishers who are reverting back to developer status. Recently Sanctuary Worlds, Trimark Interactive and Legend Entertainment have all made similar moves. For the industry, this represents part of a shake-out of an over-populated segment of the market, and is not unexpected.

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS



Gamers wait in lines in Akihabara, Tokyo's famous electronics district. Most Japanese gamers didn't have to wait, though.

NINTENDO 64 LAUNCH TOPS THE CHARTS

The Japanese launch of the Nintendo 64 has broken all previous launch records.

Nintendo has reported that on June 21st, the very first day of its Japanese launch, it sold over 300,000 Nintendo 64s. Within a little over a week, it had sold nearly every one of the 500,000 units in the first shipment.

Amazingly enough, most people didn't have to wait in line as with the Super Famicom release in 1991, as Nintendo's distribution plan was very broad. Nintendo distributed not only through the typical electronics retailers, but also through a chain called "Lawsons", which is a chain of convenient stores very similar to 7-11s in the US.

Almost anyone who wanted one only had to march to the corner of their street and pick up a unit. Interestingly enough (although not at all surprising), Nintendo has announced that nearly every person who bought a system also bought *Mario 64*, bringing the number of *Mario 64*s sold to an equally impressive number in a short period of time.

Two weeks after launch, a second shipment of units was released to Japan and there seemed to be enough systems to go around. With only 500,000 units allocated for the US market to last from launch until after Christmas, it is likely to be difficult for many would-be buyers to get one. Already many US retailers (notably Babbages and Software Etc.) have stopped taking pre-orders due to the fear that they won't be able to fill the orders with so few systems to go around.

Typical of Nintendo's past launch strategies in the US, it will try to keep quantities limited to keep demand levels so high. In doing so, it hopes to generate a lot of free press, and parlay that into an enviable image for its new machine.

Due to the shortages of units, Nintendo will not be able to launch in the European market until some time in 1997, despite having hoped for a European Christmas release. Sorry guys!

THE JAPANESE REPORT

The word on videogames straight from Japan

Sega's Arcade Force

Still seen as #1 in Arcades. Sega marches on...

Making big news for Sega this month is the fact that *Virtua Fighter 3* has gone on test and Sega's AM3 (*Sega Rally*, *Virtual On*) team has released the brutal *Last Bronx* (see preview page 045). With reports of eight-hour lines, combined with mandatory reservations to play

Virtua Fighter 3, it's again easy to see the fanaticism created over the *Virtua Fighter* series and the Sega arcade line in general.

While *VF3* and *Last Bronx* (which is also creating quite a lot of excitement) will undoubtedly do amazing business in the US, it is highly unlikely that any arcade title will have the same kind of effect outside of Japan.

Perhaps the last arcade game to be created on the infamous Model 2 board, *Last Bronx* is causing quite a stir in Japanese Arcades.



Even by Japanese standards, the excitement over *Virtua Fighter 3* testing in arcades is something of historic proportions.

Hot Titles

Last Bronx (Arcade)
Super Mario 64 (N64)
Pilot Wings (N64)
BioHazard (PlayStation)
Dragon Ball Z (PlayStation, Saturn)
Nights (Saturn)
Enemy Zero (Saturn)
Tobal (PlayStation)
ESPN Street Games (PlayStation)
Fighting Vipers (Saturn)
Virtual On (Saturn)
Final Fantasy VII (PlayStation)
Street Fighter Zero 2 (PlayStation, Saturn)

Nintendo back in the thick of it all

Nintendo launches the N64 in grand fashion

September 30th marks the day in the US when "Dinosaurs Will Fly", but in Japan, the N64 launched on June 23rd and the response was immense. As expected, first day sales figures for the N64 shattered all records, checking in at over 300,000 units. To put this into perspective, consider the fact that first day sales of N64 topped the initial numbers of PlayStation and Saturn combined. Releasing with three titles, *Super Mario 64*, *Pilot Wings 64* and a Japanese board game called *Saikyo Habu Shohgi*, getting the N64 meant standing in enormous lines for hours with Yen in hand.

Of course, there were a few Westerners who just couldn't wait for the September 30th US release date, and videogame importers had the unit selling anywhere from \$400 to \$750. While few doubted that the N64 would secure amazing sales figures in Japan, the fact remains that videogames, in general, are a tougher sell in the US. With only 500,000 (Nintendo's own estimate) units available in North America by the end of the year, even a total sell-out would leave them trailing both Saturn and PlayStation. None of this, of course, dampens the fact that Nintendo is enjoy-

ing a hugely successful launch in Japan and their success seems guaranteed for the foreseeable future.

Also in Nintendo news, a press event was recently held in Japan to announce a new partnership between Nintendo, Microsoft Co., Ltd. and Nomura Research Institute. The partnership was formed in a joint venture to provide infotainment services through a Nintendo-developed satellite modem. While it may be a logical assumption that the Nintendo connection will mean N64 gaming over the internet, the immediate content plans for the service are not strictly games and will actually work via your PC and Windows 95, not the N64. According to Nintendo President Hiroshi Yamauchi, "We do not view entertainment to be just games alone." The service will therefore focus on the entertainment industry in general, featuring news, financial reports and other consumer services.

Not even massive lines could keep the Nintendo faithful from getting their hands on the much-anticipated N64.



TOKYO TOY SHOW

The biggest little show in the Pacific

Here in the US, we have the E3 show, while in Japan it's the Tokyo Toy Show that gives gamers the best heads-up to what's on the way for the home systems. This year, the main focus of the show was on N64's launch titles and Sega's upcoming Saturn titles. Since Sony had no official presence at the show, PlayStation support was left to third-party publishers. Top Saturn titles revealed at the show included *Fighting Vipers*, *Nights*, *Rigford Saga 2* (*Mystaria 2*) and *Street Fighter Zero (Alpha) 2*. For the PlayStation, gamers were treated to their first good look at *Street Fighter Zero 2*, *Nitoshinden* (*Battle Arena Toshinden Kids*) and Namco's *Museum Volume 3*.



With long-anticipated titles like Sega's *Fighting Vipers* in playable form, the Tokyo Toy Show was an exciting event for many.

Other Notables

Last-minute news bites

X-Box Saturn is launched with Saturn keyboard and modem • The V-Saturn (Sega Saturn Clone) is released by JVC • PlayStation drops price of early games such as *Ridge Racer*, *Toshinden*, *Boxer's Road* and *King's Field II* • Hudson announces *Bomberman* for the N64 with special plans for 3D controller • Windows World Expo is held with significant PC gaming presence.

THIS MONTH

ULTRA
GAME PLAYERS

@ OnLine

A quick look at what's hot online

Welcome to *Ultra Game Players Online*, where each month we'll be highlighting some of the great features on our brand-new website. To get started, let's take a look at some of the great prizes we're offering. Since our launch in July, we've given away four Japanese Nintendo 64s, a *Street Fighter Alpha 2* arcade machine, and tons of free *Game Players* magazines! So, what do we have planned for this month? With the launch of the N64 in the US, we are, of course, giving away even more units to our loyal readers. Anyone can win! Also, be on the lookout for your chance to win another, very special arcade machine...

Okay, so once you've won your N64, you'll be needing codes for *Mario*. *Ultra Game Players Online* is your number-one source for codes for *any* game, on *any* platform. From *Mario 64* to *Quake*, if you want it, we've got it. Our website has the biggest codes archive on the net.

If you want to know which are the hottest games available, or just chat about videogames

in general, then stop by the 'Talk' section of our website and interact with hardcore gamers just like yourself. Who knows, you may even see one of the *Ultra Game Players* Editors loitering in the Palace chat room.

You'll also want to check out our 'Data Cards' section. Since our launch, this all-encompassing feature has more than doubled in size. There you'll find more images, Quicktime movies, and information on new games. Do you want to know how *Virtual On*'s development is coming along? Check out our 'Data Cards' to find out the most accurate, up-to-date report on its status.

And if this still isn't enough for you, we have tons of great game demos. Currently we have over 2500 demos for PC and Mac, with more coming in daily. This should keep you busy for quite a while. And remember, we have all the necessary utilities for your gaming pleasure, from Stuffit to PKUnzip, it's all here. So stop by, okay? See you soon!

Last word we heard

The latest videogame news fresh off the wire...

Two different Web browsers are in contention for use in the US version of Sega's NetLink Internet peripheral, which is slated for release this winter.

Virtual-On will use a modified Sega Mission Stick to provide the dual joystick action of the arcade when it is released late this year.

Psygnosis has changed the name of its *Monster Truck Rally* to *Thunder Truck Rally*, due to a licensing conflict with a forthcoming Microsoft title of a similar name.

A modified *Namco Classics* cart will be appearing on Game Boy in the near future in Japan. No word yet on a possible US release.

SNK will be porting its *Samurai Spirits* RPG to both Saturn and PlayStation early next year.

Legendary game designer, Sid Meier (of *Civilization*, *Pirates* and *Railroad Tycoon* fame) has left Microprose, to form a new company called Firaxis.

A Japanese version of E3 is being planned in Tokyo that is likely to diminish the importance of Nintendo's Shoshinkai show.

Datel has launched a PlayStation 'Memory Drive', which uses ordinary 3 1/2" floppy disks as memory carts.

The Software Publishing Association (SPA) publicly praised the US diplomatic efforts to reduce the software piracy trade in this winter.

Microsoft, Nintendo and Nomura Research have formed a joint venture to provide Japanese consumers with an 'innovative information service including shopping, entertainment, news and information' via PCs.

Takara is planning a new series of *Toshinden* games exclusively for the Sega Saturn.

Apparently, stores are running extremely short on the colored joypads for Nintendo 64 which are sold separately, despite the fact that none of the games available at the time require an extra joystick!

The organizers of Videotopia, a Pittsburgh-based exhibition on the history of videogames, are planning a nationwide tour next year.

Id will develop a version of *Quake* for Rendition's Verite chipset before other platforms including Microsoft's DirectX API. The Verite chipset will be used in Creative Labs forthcoming 3D accelerator board for PC.

Psygnosis' *Formula One* game for the PlayStation has been delayed until later in the fall, as the developers attempt to redo many graphic elements, due to new restrictions on tobacco and alcohol.

WIREFAP

New Game Gossip • Industry Rumors • Behind-The-Scenes Info.

Nintendo finally puts out

After years of speculation, the N64 is finally a reality

After two years of speculation, delays, several name changes and the nightmares of development, the Nintendo 64 was finally released to hungry Japanese gamers. While some retailers claimed the hype and long lines weren't as impressive as previous Nintendo releases, it came as no surprise to anyone when the N64 sold out in just two days. *Super Mario 64*, *Pilotwings* and *Shogei* (a Japanese Chess game) sold out well in advance of the system for the yen equivalent of about 90 bucks a game. The multi-colored controllers also sold like wildfire, even though a single multi-player N64 game hasn't been released yet.

People who had pre-ordered their Nintendo 64s were stopped on the

street by other eager gamers as they left the store with their prized machines. Some were offered as much as \$1,000 for the N64, but only a few people gave them up. UK and German gamers are said to be paying as much as \$1,500 for an imported machine because supplies are so limited.

'Demand for the machine has more than exceeded our expectations,' said a high-ranking Nintendo Insider, 'and we had really high hopes.' The demand was so high, in fact, that third-party Japanese developers had to wait in line for N64s, because Nintendo's allotted 'ten machines per company' just wasn't enough.

So what's next, and are there any lessons to be learned here? Well, as the

September 30th U.S. launch date arrives, expect to see at least two more titles in Japan, namely *Wave Racer* and *Kirby's Air Race*. Still, Nintendo is way behind schedule and only three US launch games are confirmed: *Super Mario 64*, *Pilotwings 64*, and *Cruis'n USA*. Our advice is to order early and buddy up to your retailer.

New life spotted on Saturn

After a so-so start, Sega's starting to pick up the pace

A arcade giant and PlayStation powerhouse Namco is rumored to be developing Saturn titles. Namco has long been said to be in talks with Sega, and has been working on a Saturn translation of *Cyber Sled* ever since the PlayStation version released. That game appears to be in limbo, but the proposed new deal is said to give Saturn exclusive rights to future Namco arcade titles. The deal doesn't apply to all new games, however — PlayStation mainstays like *Ridge Racer*, *Tekken* and subsequent sequels will remain on the PlayStation.

Takara's *Toshinden 2/URA* for Saturn features two new characters, including a Ripper with knives and a rumored new female character. This new *Toshinden* is rumored to be very different from *Toshinden 2*, which a spokesperson for Takara said the developers decided they didn't want to port over.

Last Bronx has just released in Japan and will soon make its way to Saturn. The game features

the same basic style as *Fighting Vipers* and the *Virtua Fighter* series, but focuses heavily on weapon combat. There's even a rumored code that changes the fighters' weapons into unique alternatives. For example, one character sports a hammer, which can be changed to a big tuna (don't worry though, it's dolphin friendly).

Look for XBAND to make an exciting announcement at next year's E3 show in Atlanta. Currently XBAND's Sega Saturn service is launching in Japan, and is reportedly getting a great reception. The rumored E3 announcement is said to focus on a US version of Saturn XBAND which comes with a keyboard (for chatting) and disk drive. The machine will also utilize a credit card-sized slot for game saves, hidden characters and other goodies. While this same feature was in the Genesis and Super NES versions of XBAND, it was never taken advantage of.

The Saturn version, however, has big plans for the cards.

SONY: Out with the old, in with the new

Sony plans its new strategy

As we've previously reported in these pages, developers have been steaming over Sony's policy against 2D games. Now we hear that the company has gone on to reject as many as 50 games from third parties that Sony deems too '2D-ish'. The company claims it will continue to reject titles that 'don't utilize the PlayStation's potential'. Capcom has taken perhaps the biggest hit — its *Buster Brothers* title was one of the first games that Sony singled out. Also, Sony axed *Mega Man X3*, which Capcom is currently submitting a second time.

Other developers recently at Sony to get game approval include Next Level, Zombie, Boss Games and Atlas. Atlas is pitching a new racing title called *Peek Performance*. The game will boast 20 cars, 5-6 tracks, rear and sideview mirrors and a drivers view. Sounds cool, but Sony hasn't approved it yet...

Martin Marietta (the people behind *Virtua Fighter 3's* Model 3 board) and Sony have reportedly parted ways. The two were rumored to be developing a helicopter game together for the PlayStation.

WALKING THE STREETS OF JAPAN

Major moves in Tokyo

While our pets were waiting in line for their N64s, we headed off to a local arcade that was testing *Virtua Fighter 3*. Japanese players were lined up deep to try the game, making it near impossible to get a peek at the screen. Average wait time for a game of VF3? The arcade manager told us gamers waited eight hours. Demand was so great that, to avoid a riot, the arcade was booking appointments in advance.

At a Japanese game show in Akiba (Japan's gaming and electronics district), we got a chance to eye a display of *Tobal no. 1*. Although the demo looked good, what really caught our eye was the *Final Fantasy VII* demo, which will ship with copies of *Tobal no. 1* in Japan (a similar demo is planned for *Tobal's* U.S. release). A long rendered intro featured a dragon sweeping down from the clouds and swirling around the 'callers', blasting fire. Truly amazing!

Bits and Bytes

So, is Acclaim planning to buy Paynsoft? No one's saying yes, but no one's denying it, either... • Williams, which recently bought out Time Warner — which is now Atari Games — laid the law down recently. 'Atari Games has a year to turn a profit or it's lights out,' says a Williams Insider. • It's official — Red-hot developer Boss Game Studio is working on *Top Gear*

Rally for Kemco, which is planned to be an exclusive N64 title. We got a peek at this game while back, and it was looking extremely hot... • The Nintendo 32-bit handheld is still shrouded in secrecy, but our sources hint that the initial batch of games may include some familiar titles. Rumor has it that scaled-down versions of N64 heavy-hitters are in the unit's launch plans.

• Following the current 'classic' gaming trend, Konami is said to have a *Classic Pak* in development for the PlayStation. The pack includes such grand pappy quarter-munchers as *Gyruss*, *Time Pilot* and *Amidar*. In other Konami news, *Castlevania* for PlayStation is due to hit towards the end of the year in Japan, with a first-quarter stateside release. Also look for Konami to put out *Dracule 3D* on

the N64 sometime next year. • Finally, this bit of fun for all you old-timers out there: Radio Shack is selling old Atari 2600, 5200 and 7800 stock. Don't believe me? The Atari 2600, which sells for a meek 39.99, is still listed in current Radio Shack catalogs. In addition to the hardware you can get games like *Pac-Man*, *Yars Revenge*, *Mt. Pac-Man*, *Dig Dug* and *Battlezone*, each of which sells for 9.99.

SUDDENLY, THINGS ARE GETTING PERSONAL.

Now, it's your reputation on the line.
And time to leave your mark in this
perfect translation of the #1 arcade
phenomenon. On your side is the
innovative custom combo system,
now allowing you to link together
your own series of brutal attacks.
You'll need every possible advantage
to take on a total of 18 fighters, the
most ever in Street Fighter legend.
Remember, hesitation is deadly.
Because in the end, it's all about
who's the last one left standing.



CAPCOM



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7'0"

6'0"

5'0"

4'0"

3'0"

THE BIGGEST AND BADDEST 16-BIT MK EVER is on the street. 5 new backgrounds. 8 new playable characters including Kitana, Jade, Scorpion



and Reptile from MK2. 3 modes of play. Selectable ending sequences.
And the ability to play as Rain and Noob Saibot. Watch your back.

THE BIG PICTURE

Industry Info • Exclusive Polls
Overall View • Sales Charts • Graphs

Approval Rating

What YOU think of the industry's big guns

Welcome to The Big Picture! We've expanded our charts section to include more information on the current status of the industry. We'll show you the numbers behind the hype, and read between the lines to find out what's really going on.

To start things off, let's take a look at this month's Industry Approval Rating. In an exclusive *ULTRA Game Players* Online poll, we asked players to tell us how satisfied they were with the 'Big Three' videogame console manufacturers. After a one-month period we then tabulated the results.

Sony and Sega appear to be keeping gamers happy, but it looks as if the constant delays of the N64 has left a bad taste in the mouths of Nintendo players. It should be interesting to see if this changes now that the N64 is finally out.

NINTENDO
36%

SEGA
69%

SONY
70%

Japanese Top Ten



Is *Nights* really any good? Well, Japanese gamers' thought enough of Sega's latest hit to knock N64's *Mario 64* to second-place.

- Nights**
SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
- Super Mario 64**
SYSTEM: NINTENDO 64
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
- Track & Field**
SYSTEM: KONAMI
PUBLISHER: PLAYSTATION

- TOTAL NBA '95**
- SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: SONY CE
 - BIOHAZZARD**
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
 - TORICO**
SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
 - KING OF FIGHTERS '95**
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: SNK

- NINTENDO MUSEUM CLASSICS VOL. 3**
- SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
 - TEKKEN 2**
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
 - PILOTHINGS 64**
SYSTEM: NINTENDO 64
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO

While the impressive launch of the N64 was enough to shoot *Super Mario 64* straight to the top, the excitement died down a bit just a couple of short weeks later, allowing Sega's *Nights* to slip into the top spot. *PilotWings* also took a big dip, dropping from as high as third-place to the number 10 spot. The growing populari-

ty of the NBA among the Japanese youth was enough to earn Sony's hoops game a number four spot, while *Tekken 2*, which has been out in Japan for months and months, is still holding strong. In fact, you can't turn on a TV in Tokyo without spotting a *Tekken 2* commercial. Equally amazing is the fact that *Biohazard* (*Resident Evil* in the US) is still in the top five! This has spurred an avalanche of knock-offs, which we should also be seeing here.

YOUR 10 FAVORITE RELEASED GAMES

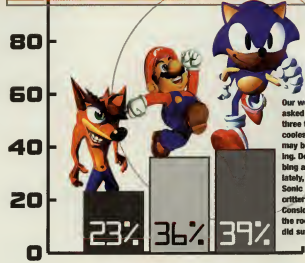
- Wipeout**
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS
- Resident Evil**
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
- Virtua Fighter 2**
SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
- Super Mario RPG**
SYSTEM: SUPER NES
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
- Ultimate MK3**
SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: MILENIA
- NBA Action**
SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
- Panzer Dragoon II**
SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
- Toshinden 2**
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: PLANETES INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
- Track & Field**
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
- Bust-A-R Move**
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: TAITO

With the impending release of *Wipeout XL*, it looks like the sequel-hungry PlayStation gamers have gone back to the original to tide them over. Sega fans waiting for *Fighting Vipers*, *Virtua Fighter Kids* and *Virtua Fighter 3* also seem to be re-visiting *Virtua Fighter 2* to satisfy their AM2 urge.

Just like in Japan, *Resident Evil* is still extremely popular, and the deep gameplay of *Super Mario RPG* appears to be keeping Super NES fans coming back for more.

The long-awaited release of *Ultimate MK3* for Saturn is also tops among Sega gamers who still enjoy a healthy dose of 2D blood-'n'-gore action between rounds of VF2.

Cooltest Mascot



Our web-readers were asked which of the three top mascots is the coolest, and the results may be a little surprising. Despite Mario grabbing all the headlines lately, players still see Sonic as the hippest critter in town. Considering that he's the rookie, Crash also did surprisingly well.

ULTRA GP Top Ten



When *Super Mario 64* first came in, we were mesmerized. Chris stopped sleeping and eating. It was a scary thing, really.

1 Super Mario 64
 SYSTEM: NINTENDO 64
 PUBLISHER: NINTENDO

2 Nights
 SYSTEM: SATURN
 PUBLISHER: SEGA

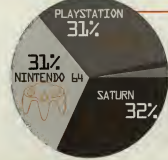
3 Crash Bandicoot
 SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: SONY CE

- TOTAL NO. 1**
 SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: SONY CE
- 4**
- PHOTON RINGS 64**
 SYSTEM: NINTENDO 64
 PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
- 5**
- STAR GLADIATOR**
 SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
- 6**
- STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2**
 SYSTEM: SATURN
 PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
- 7**

- WARRIOR 32P**
 SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
- 8**
- LAST BORN**
 SYSTEM: ARCADE
 PUBLISHER: SEGA
- 9**
- FLIGHTING WIPERS**
 SYSTEM: SATURN
 PUBLISHER: SEGA
- 10**

hogged all the attention, with the also-excellent *Nights* and *Crash* duking it out for second place. This month also saw lots of great fighting game action around the office, but — what the hell? — for the first time in years, no one was hardly playing any Super NES *Super Bomberman*!

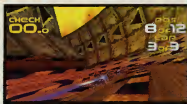
Hottest-Looking System



Just for fun, we asked gamers on the internet which system looks the best. While it was a neck-and-neck race all the way, the Saturn managed to pull ahead by a single percentage point. I guess matte-black is still in.

Wipeout XL

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: PSONICS



Final Fantasy VII

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: SQUARE



Sonic X-Treme

SYSTEM: SATURN
 PUBLISHER: SEGA



Crash Bandicoot

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: SONY CE

Virtua Fighter 3

SYSTEM: ARCADE
 PUBLISHER: SEGA

Super Mario 64

SYSTEM: NINTENDO 64
 PUBLISHER: NINTENDO

Tekken 2

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: NAOI

FI World Championship

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: PSONICS

Total no. 1

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: SONY CE

Die Hard Trilogy

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
 PUBLISHER: FOX INTERACTIVE

Everyone can't wait to get their hands on the sequel to *Wipeout*, and we can't blame them. We've been playing our advanced copy to death, and as good as the original game was, this one absolutely blows it away!

PlayStation's first *Final Fantasy* title is another must-have, and it appears that gamers are ready for the big wave of mascot games by casting high votes for *Sonic X-Treme* and *Crash Bandicoot*.

Surprisingly though, *Super Mario 64* doesn't check in until the number six spot after spending the previous weeks at the top. It looks like the long wait for the N64 may be wearing down the Nintendo-faithful.



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THE NEW



FIGHTING

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THE FUTURE IS NOW!

Much like the idea of Ryu without a Dragon Punch, a videogame industry without fighting games ranks just short of implausible. Even from its earliest days, when games like *Karate Champ* had gamers memorizing 'moves' for the first time, the fighting game genre has inspired a devotion like no other. In turn, game makers have made incredible strides in the games with ongoing enhancements that has yielded monumental results. Never before in the history of the genre has there been a period that promises such enormous advancements in fighting game design and execution as the next few months.

While the emphasis on 3D fighting games in the last two years is easily justifiable, with the likes of such successful series as *Tekken*, *Toshinden* and *Virtua Fighter*, it is the coming year's games that will finally earn all the attention the 3D titles of the genre have been receiving. In the next few months, 3D fighting games will finally start to show the maturity of design that is exemplified by 2D fighting games and side-scrolling action titles. Not surprisingly, the companies responsible for the very birth of the genre are the very ones prepared to take the 3D fighting game to the next level. Not to be outshined by their 3D cousins, con-

tinuing refinements in the 2D fighting game arena are coming from industry giants like Capcom and SNK. But regardless of dimensional preferences, the new advancements in interactive backgrounds, special moves and, of course, graphics, make this holiday season one of the most widely-anticipated ever for fighting game fans.



SPECIAL ATTACKS

"Extreme graphic violence, like pulling out spines, just isn't necessary to make a good fighting game." - Jerry Mamoda, Arcade Product Manager, Namco



1 Moving in 3D space has never been as easy or as thorough as in *Tobal No. 1*.

2 Grappling with an opponent in *Tobal No. 1* can lead to any number of outcomes, giving the player something else to work with beyond the 'punch, kick, throw' routine.

3 With special emphasis on weapon techniques, *Star Gladiator* gives each character an extra degree of strategic depth with their weapon of choice.

4 Mixing several different weapons and fighting styles, *Last Bronx* opens the door to endless new possibilities in the ring.

At the heart of every fighting game is a selection of moves which make up the action. Since the beginning of the genre, the core moves in a fighting game have always been based on punches, kicks and throws. It's no surprise that this season's group of games remains faithful to the tradition. However, these new fighting games do boast some important gameplay enhancements. A host of new weapon-oriented moves, as well as several different innovative techniques for reversals and grapple moves, promise to broaden and intensify fighting strategy

and tactics. With each new added attack, the sophistication of the gameplay matches the startling advancements in fighting game graphics.

Certainly one of the hottest topics in 3D fighting game design is the use of 3D space. While series such as *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken* have offered fully 3D characters, the actual use of the 3D space in the environment has been extremely limited. One of the games slated for the PlayStation, *Tobal No. 1*, makes the most dramatic use of this previously under-utilized space by offering the total freedom of

movement other 3D fighting games have only hinted at.

Counter moves are another enhancement being added to the mainstream of fighting game design. Games such as *Star Gladiator*, *Tobal No. 1* and *Street Fighter Alpha 2* offer innovative techniques in defense that add to the sophistication of the experience. Originally, fighting games were little more than a matter of individual reaction times, but soon, players will be able to predict their opponent's strategies and use them to their advantage. Games such as *Tobal No. 1* and *Soul Edge* actually offer grappling

moves wherein the players are locked together until one player can edge out the other by using a strategic move.

And then there's the sudden popularity of weapons. With games such as *Last Bronx* in the arcade, and *Soul Edge* and *Star Gladiator* slated for the home, fighting games will offer a gameplay challenge distinctly different from hand-to-hand combat. Whether weapon fighting will eventually take over as the main fighting style in the genre is yet to be seen, but the success of games such as these games will likely help to shape the future of the genre.



GAMES



Street Fighter Alpha 2

A testament to the 'always room for improvement' theory, *Street Fighter Alpha 2* (see page 042) from Capcom introduces a new custom combo system and more responsive gameplay than ever before.



Soul Edge

Bringing advanced weapon fighting to the home this year, Namco's *Soul Edge* takes 3D fighting to a whole new level of sophistication, featuring such important innovations as weapon lock-ups.



War Gods

Bringing their familiar digitized look and gore-fest approach into the 3D arena, Williams offers the bloodiest of this year's fighting game crop with *War Gods*.



Last Bronx

New from Sega's AM3, *Last Bronx* (preview pg. 045) is just showing up in US arcades. With lightning-fast gameplay and realistic attacks, this game is a state-of-the-art weapon brawler.



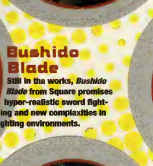
Total No. 1

From Dream Factory and Square comes a groundbreaking new fighting game called *Total No. 1* (preview pg. 060), featuring new levels of 3D freedom and a totally original Quest mode.



Virtua Fighter 3

The pinnacle in fighting games, *Virtua Fighter 3* (while only about 60% finished at press-time), is already shaping up to be the most significant addition to the genre since its inception.



Bushido Blade

Still in the works, *Bushido Blade* from Square promises hyper-realistic sword fighting and new complexities in fighting environments.

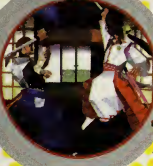


Star Gladiator

Representing Capcom's first venture in 3D fighting, *Star Gladiator* (preview pg. 048) takes the over-the-top approach to the genre, with alien fighters and supernatural attacks.

Fighting Vipers

Based on the *Virtua Fighter 2* engine, *Fighting Vipers* (preview pg. 061), from Sega's AM2, offers interactive backgrounds and introduces a new break-away armor strategy.



GAME PROFILES



COMBOS

'Some games you can just pound on buttons and win consistently. That's poor design.' - *Chris Kramer, Product Specialist, Capcom*

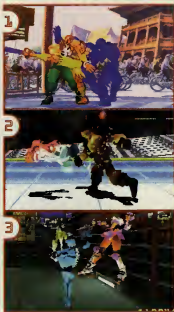
Byond the special attacks, graphics, and control lies the combo system, one of the most crucial elements to any fighting game. Many fighting games have tried to incorporate new and innovative combo systems, but the round of titles debuting in the coming months are set to rewrite the book.

The traditional 'two-in-one' combo is apparent in titles like *Star Gladiator* and *Street Fighter Alpha 2*, but *Star Gladiator* takes the evolution of the combo system a step further with overlapping combo strings that allow them to branch out in several different directions. *SFA 2*'s custom combo system doubles and speeds up any move the player performs, allowing for a

nearly unlimited variety of combos. Also, juggling combos have traditionally been a way to string a number of hits together by keeping an opponent off the ground and defenseless. *Fighting Vipers* and *VF 3* add a new element to it with the inclusion of walls that can be used to pin an opponent and keep them in the air for double the damage.

But despite the innovations and improvements that are coming at a rampant pace, there are still problems. Chris Kramer, Product Specialist at Capcom, had this to say, 'The one thing that drives me nuts are the games that you have to memorize various patterns, then stand back and watch the wild combos. Games like *Killer Instinct* are more of a memory test.' The collection

of fighting games coming out this Christmas thankfully avoids imitating a combo system like *Killer Instinct*'s (with the obvious exception of *Killer Instinct 2*), and go for the expanded strategic possibilities of the more intuitive chain and juggle combos.



1 The custom combos of *SFA2* allow the player to create their own combo on the fly, an innovative distinction from previous games.
2 The ability to branch a chain combo in several directions makes for a larger variety of combos in *Star Gladiator*.
3 Fortunately, a display lets the player know which button combination works and which doesn't.
4 Juggling an opponent off the wall in *Fighting Vipers* results in damage from both the blow and from the wall, thereby adding a whole new dimension to juggle combos.

BACKGROUNDS

'I think we'll start seeing more diversions such as using weapons and interactive backgrounds.' - *Steve Hutchins, Producer, Sega*

Though the definition of a good background in a fighting game used to mean nothing more than something pretty to look at while playing, the role of the environments is about to change in a major way. From the use of ring-outs backgrounds in games like *Virtua Fighter 2*, to actual walls which the player can interact with in *Fighting Vipers*, the background is not just about aesthetics any more.

On the most basic design level, the use of animated backgrounds may not add much in terms of actual gameplay. But games such as *Star Gladiator*, *Street Fighter Alpha 2* and *Soul Edge* still exploit this graphic device to its fullest potential by bringing the backgrounds to life. Fighting about a shaky raft as it races down the river just seems more fun than fighting in a traditional arena. By the same token, just seeing an enormous crowd of bicyclists

peddling by in *Street Fighter Alpha 2* seems to bring the environment to life.

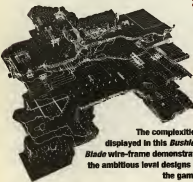
But perhaps the most exciting use of backgrounds in the next wave of fighting games are in *Bushido Blade* and, of course, *Virtua Fighter 3*. While similar ideas are explored in Sega's *Fighting Vipers*, these two games truly utilize the environments to add a new element and dimension to gameplay. In *Bushido Blade*, the standard square arena has been abandoned for a far more sophisticated landscape complicated with elements such as walls, stairs and slopes. The sheer size alone in such arenas stretches the boundaries of contemporary thinking, but it's the realistic elements, such as a simple flight of stairs, which really start the mind reeling with the strategic and tactical possibilities.

But perhaps no game will showcase the advancement of interactive backgrounds as much as *Virtua Fighter 3*. Similar in concept to *Bushido Blade*,

VF3 offers a huge variety in fighting arenas, each with its own unique characteristics. From realistic subway stations to underground caves, the game's creators have allowed the realistic boundaries of the arenas to control the action. For example, Jeffry fights on an isolated desert island surrounded by water, but since it's completely realistic to continue a fight in the shallow surf, the game allows for such play. The game's developers have also worked hard to incorporate different background elements through the use of special attacks such as a flip-kick off the wall in Lau's stage. It's this high level of interactivity that not only make for some cool-looking new moves, but allows the player to expand his thinking and create new strategies.



1 Knocking an opponent clear through a wall is a new level of background interaction not known before *Fighting Vipers*. 2 Although it doesn't actually affect gameplay, the visual treat of watching spaceships fly by in *Star Gladiator* adds to the overall depth of the gameplay experience. 3 *Virtua Fighter 3* will redefine the genre, with unparalleled realism and wholly-interactive fighting environments.



The complexities displayed in this *Bushido Blade* wire-frame demonstrate the ambitious level designs in the game.



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November '96

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THE FUTURE

'3D fighting games will not reach the level of 2D games until they look like the opening CG sequences.' - Seichi Ishii, President, Dream Factory

The immediate future holds great advancements in game-play and graphics, with this season's crop leading the way. And with titles like *Street Fighter 3*, *Tekken 3*, and *Mortal Kombat 4* on the way for early next year, things are only going to get more exciting. But with all these great games on the way, the question still remains, what's next? The opinion in the industry varies greatly depending on who you speak with.

Jerry Momoda, Product Manager at Namco says, "Polygon fighters are here to stay, and the 2D fighter is dead, with the exception of games with the history of a *Street Fighter*."

Chris Kramer, Product Specialist at Capcom, responds with, "I don't see

2D games going away. People still like the hand-drawn characters and, as of right now, the 2D games are superior because the control of the 3D games hasn't come together yet."

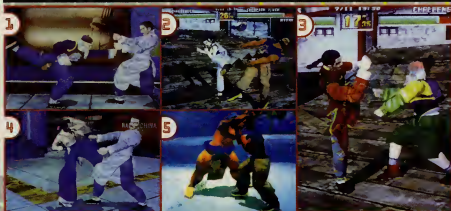
Seichi Ishii, Producer of *Tobal No. 1* and president of Dream Factory, puts it as, "3D games will not reach the same level as 2D fighting games until they can look like the opening CG sequences in games like *Tobal No. 1*."

Despite the differences in opinions, it's obvious from the amount of 3D fighting games that the 2D fighter is slowing down. But with the huge success of *Street Fighter Alpha 2* and other classic fighting series, it is also evident that 2D certainly isn't dead. Still, it may be impossible to create another "fran-

chise" title in 2D. Has the 2D fighting game lost its viability as a creative force in fighting game design? One thing is certain — the evolution of the 3D fighter hasn't reached near its potential, while the 2D fighter has been fine-tuned to near perfection. But regardless of 2D or 3D, fans of good fighting games appear to be in for one glorious holiday season, full of new and varied experiences.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 3

CHECK OUT THESE NEW VF3 SHOTS!



1 It looks like Shun Di still has his usual assortment of crazy off-balanced moves. 2 Pal delivers a crashing kick to Jeffery. 3 Shun Di's new "happy mountain climber" outfit is so ridiculous-looking, it's awesome! 4 The subway looks to be one of the coolest new levels. 5 Hey, who let E. Honda into a Sega game? Dope, sorry...

Perhaps the most-anticipated fighting game ever, *Virtua Fighter 3* is causing a major ruckus on-line and in the print magazines. These updated screens reveal some of the varied terrains, special effects, new characters, and the amazing graphics.

VF3 has been cited throughout this feature as an example of the advancing fighting game genre, and *ULTRA GP* believes it will be the new standard by which all 3D fighting games are judged. The interactive backgrounds and varied terrain gives VF3 more new play elements than any game on the way. And though the exact

specifics of the fighting engine haven't been revealed yet, we know that interactive backgrounds and complete 3D movement will add a whole new dimension to gameplay. Consider the implications of not just merely deciding to force a ring out, but instead having to actually work your way to the side of the arena that allows for a ring out. Or how about pinning an opponent in a corner and using the walls to double the damage of offensive attacks? The gameplay possibilities are endless.

As for technology, VF3's model 3 board at least doubles the power of its nearest competitor. The raw processing power is being used to create charac-

ters that seem to be taken straight from rendered intros. Even the subtleties of the characters' facial expressions are captured to perfection.

As of right now, VF3 has no peers technologically, and judging from past history (the incredible gameplay of VF and VF2), it should definitely be in a class all its own when it hits US arcades this fall.



1 This dark underground cave setting appears to come complete with a *Fighting Vipers*-ish cage. 2 This street scene is the most incredible-looking level so far. Looks like Jeffery is about to become street pizza... 3 It's hard to imagine what affect the environment could have in this desert scene. 4 There's that big sumo again, laying down the law to Jeffery. 5 Aoi promises to be one of the deepest characters in the game. Rumor has it her second costume is a Japanese schoolgirl uniform... 6 Akira, deliver his usual moves.

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They can get the order to strike anywhere. Anytime. Against absolutely anyone. They don't have names or faces but are the most fearless, covert, and lethal military task force ever assembled. Or should I say, never assembled. Because according to all official channels, they don't even exist. But for a myth, they do an important job. Things the regular military could never handle. Like going into Russia to make sure the Cold War doesn't heat up again. **Written by Andrea Grey**

In real life the
good guys don't
always win. But
when this outfit
gets involved
that's definitely
the way to bet.



**This unit has a very simple approach:
never leave a place the way they found it.**



These guys attack
with surgical precision.
The only difference
between them and a
surgeon, however, is
that no one comes out of
their operation alive.





Any idiot can build
a big concrete
and steel building.
But it takes a
damn good soldier
to knock one down.



Dracula Strike
satellite surveillance

A black and white photograph showing a large formation of military tanks and personnel. The tanks are arranged in a line, moving down a city street. Many soldiers are visible on top of the tanks and walking alongside them. The background shows city buildings and a large crowd of people lining the street. The overall scene suggests a major military operation or a large-scale demonstration.





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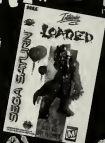
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some FAT
UGLY Boy,
and the GROUND
ripples beneath your
feet - you're not
DRUNK or F*%@ED up
on DRUGS - you're
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MATURE



AGES 17+

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PREVIEWS

Want the latest pics and info on the newest games? We got it.

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Welcome to the new and improved **ULTRA Game Players** Previews section. We've buckled down to make this one of the strongest parts of the magazine, with more screens, extra info, and behind-the-

scenes information on tomorrow's hottest prospects. Here we'll give first-looks, keep you updated on how the big titles are progressing, and talk directly to the games' developers to give you the scoop on what's really going on. If you're looking for a magazine that's just as hungry for new games as you are, you've found it.

Total No. 1



Turok



Star Gladiator



MDK



Street Fighter Alpha 2

SYSTEMS: SATURN, PLAYSTATION

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

New characters, Custom Combos, and short skirts. What more could you want?

Have you been waiting for the Super-Custom-Combo goodness that only Capcom can bring home? If so, there is truly cause to rejoice, because the home versions of *Street Fighter Alpha 2*, which is, without a doubt, the best Capcom fighting game ever, should hit your living room by mid-October!

The console versions are exactly the same as the coin-op in gameplay and looks, with very few exceptions. There are fewer frames (because consoles have about 1/20 the amount of RAM as arcade units do), but the game still maintains the convincing, silky-smooth animation for which Capcom is known. Practice and Tournament modes should be available, as will codes that can change Ryu into Evii

Ryu, and that sort (and yes, they will be different than in the arcade!).

The Custom Combo, that fear-instilling personalized move, looks and feels just as solid as it did in the arcades. They're much easier to pull off on Saturn than on PlayStation (In fact, the Saturn version is easier to control in general over the PlayStation version because of the traditional button set-up on the Saturn pad.)



1-4 This time around, Ryu has picked up a little admirer. Her name is Sakura and, although she may appear to be your average teenaged Japanese schoolgirl, she packs quite a wallop! She's become an instant favorite among SF fanatics. This sequence gives you a pretty good idea why.



1 Ouch. Finishing off your opponent with a Super puts a pretty big dent in his ego. 2 Alpha's amazing art style will even have you glued to the in-between screens, like this one.



and plenty, and her depth and playability is as solid as any of the veteran characters.

All of the cool levels are in place — Ryu's snowy full-moon area; Ken's party scene packed with old Capcom characters eating, swimming, and schmoozing; Zangief's caged arena; Dan's outdoor Japanese vegetable market; Chun-Li's bicycle-filled street scene; and Dahlsim's elephant level, with an elephant goddess in the background and sitar music filling the air.

Overall, this port promises to bring the solid *Street Fighter* gameplay, the crisp graphics and smooth animation, and the whopping 18 characters, all into your home come this fall. We're looking forward to it.



1 Rolento, from *Final Fight*, makes an impressive entrance. 2 The Super moves are all still just as deadly as before.



1 YES! Dahlsim and Zangief are back, and better than ever, with all new moves and updated Alpha series specials. 2 Dan's lunging kick is one of his more powerful moves. He may have started out as just another Ryu/Ken/Akuma knock-off, but he's definitely earned his keep. 3 Gen has the ability to switch between two totally different fighting styles on the fly. 4 Birdie's back, and his chain-lass Super is just as mean as ever.

Burning Road

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: PLAYMATES INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
DEVELOPER: FLINDSFT/TOKA
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

For a new PlayStation racing game to really stand out from its numerous and worthy competitors (*Ridge Racer*, *Wipeout*, etc.), it has to be either totally original, or at the very least, assemble the more exceptional features found in the proven winners. Playmates is count-

ing on the latter for *Burning Road*, due in early fall.

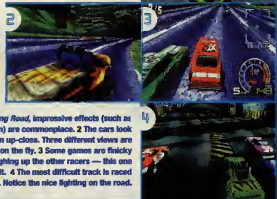
ULTRA GAME PLAYERS spoke with Dave Hoffman, producer for *Burning Road*, 'it takes some of the best elements (of other racers) and combines them all into one game for the Playstation.' Strong features

include everything from a wide variety of vehicles to choose from, to variable weather conditions. The surface and traction of the road also changes — one moment you're skidding on ice, the next you're bouncing over unpaved ground.

If the gameplay can manage to come together (hopefully with a link option), gamers should have little trouble warming up to this one.



The track changes drastically as you race along the course, and you have to race the varied terrain in different way. The ice patches make for some pretty slick riding.



1 In *Burning Road*, impressive effects (such as this rain) are commonplace. 2 The cars look great, even up-close. Three different views are selectable on the fly. 3 Some games are finicky about roughing up the other racers — this one encourages it. 4 The most difficult track is raced at night. Notice the nice lighting on the road.

Mega Man 8

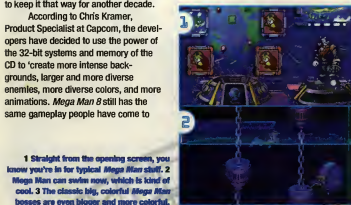
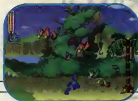
SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION, SATURN
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
RELEASE DATE: FIRST-QUARTER '97

For over ten years, *Mega Man* has held a place in the hearts of gamers and, with *Mega Man 8* for the PlayStation and Saturn, Capcom hopes to keep it that way for another decade.

According to Chris Kramer, Product Specialist at Capcom, the developers have decided to use the power of the 32-bit systems and memory of the CD to 'create more intense back-grounds, larger and more diverse enemies, more diverse colors, and more animations. *Mega Man 8* still has the same gameplay people have come to

expect, but the smoother animation and tons of new items create an even better experience'.

One noticeable difference from the 16-bit *Mega Man* games is the extra 32-bit sprite's capabilities.



1 Straight from the opening screen, you know you're in for typical *Mega Man* stuff. 2 Mega Man can swim now, which is kind of cool. 3 The classic big, colorful *Mega Man* bosses are even bigger and more colorful.



Area 51

SYSTEMS: SATURN, PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: WILLIAMS ENTERTAINMENT
DEVELOPER: TANTALUS ENTERTAINMENT
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

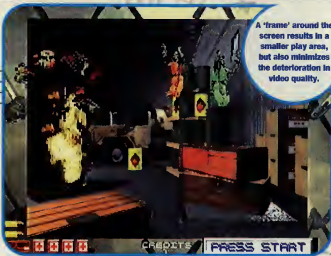
Taking advantage of newly acquired Time Warner Interactive's assets, Williams Entertainment is bringing the arcade blast-em-up *Area 51* to home console systems.

The most daunting challenge of

the conversion is transferring the digitized graphics without a significant loss in quality. Portions of the game that feature a static camera angle show graphics comparable to the arcade version, but sequences that feature a moving viewpoint (which is most of the game) display significant pixilation and a decline in image quality. The degraded 'grainy' graphics actually resemble the graphics associated with many early Saturn titles. Keep in mind though, that the PlayStation version of the game may not suffer as much graphically, and there is certainly time



One butt-ugly bad guy, up-close and personal. Fire at will.



for the Saturn graphics to be improved. Still, even if the graphics aren't perfect, the gameplay remains intact. The game may move a tad slower, but

overall, the fast-paced, blood-splattering, adrenaline-pumping action seems to have made the conversion from the arcade virtually unscathed.

Even in its early stages, *Area 51* appears to be a title that will give the *Virtua Cop* series a run for its money on home consoles.

1 Don't shoot her — she's one of the good guys. 2 All hell's breaking loose, and all you've got is your trusty light gun. 3 The game really gets going when you start this chase scene.

Powerslave

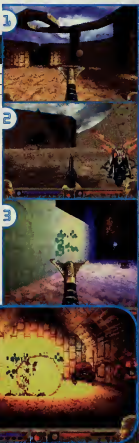
SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION AND SATURN
PUBLISHER: ASC GAMES
DEVELOPER: GRAY MATTER
RELEASE DATE: FALL

Does the world really need another *Doom* clone? Playmates thinks so. *Powerslave*, coming to the Saturn this fall, has all the elements of your standard first-person shooter, with a few surprises thrown in for good measure. Alien forces

have seized the ancient Egyptian city of Carnac, devoured the women and children and enslaved the men. With a little guidance from the ghost of King Ramses, you must seek out six sacred artifacts of Ramses and defeat the invaders.

So what differentiates *Powerslave* from the horde of other *Doom*-alikes? According to Carlos Rodriguez, *Powerslave*'s producer, quite a bit. "From what I've seen, our 3-D engine is the best. It light sources beautifully, and it's a true 3D engine with six degrees of freedom." When underwater, you can look up and down, though not while walking. Any overhead adversaries can be taken out by jumping just before firing.

Powerslave does look good and, with over 20 levels, the average gamer is sure to find a lot to like.



1 The Egyptian scenery looks great, but may be a bit repetitive. 2 You have a number of weapons at your disposal, but you'll end up using the pistol the most. 3 The light-sourcing in this game is a beauty to behold. 4 What Egyptian setting would be complete without grenades?

Last Bronx

SYSTEMS: ARCADE, SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SEGA AM3
RELEASE DATES: LATE SUMMER

Is this the next classic Sega coin-op?

One would think that Sega would be content with its already-strong line of fighting titles. The *Virtua Fighter* series and *Fighting Vipers* stand out in the arcades with a realism and style matched by none, even as we speak Sega is preparing to unleash the unbelievable *Virtua Fighter 3*. But a strong desire to distinguish itself from AM2 drove AM3 to create what will be a hardcore gamer's dream, *Last Bronx*.

Ironically having nothing to do with New York's infamous urban

sprawl, *Last Bronx* is a fighting game driven by the Model 2B board with characters who have street smarts and looks, interactive backgrounds in real-life Tokyo settings, and weapons that enable the grimy-looking ensemble to combine sheer brute force with the traditional (and sometimes) more subtle Japanese and Chinese martial arts, Aikido and Jujitsu. Sporting eight characters, each with his or her own unique weapon, the *Last Bronx* cast is a motley street crew that looks more like mem-

bers of a street gang with their biker clothes, earrings, and tattoos. But it's how the characters' weapons are used that's so cool. For example, Tommy can slip his pole beneath your character's arms and flip with the ease of *VF2*'s Pai. Says Akio Abe, the game's



Last Bronx uses backgrounds from popular Tokyo locations, like in this subway scene.

director, 'We used optical techniques to achieve bigger motions and magnets for creating some of the smaller and more precise motions. We've succeeded in making weapons move very realistically. Because we're using weapons at different lengths, it was difficult to get a good balance in the game, but we've managed to achieve a playable game.' A special 'quick-fake' feature, unique to the title, was also added. For example, usually when you punch, you push the punch button and

the motion is automatically run completely through to the hit or miss. Here, when you attack, you can stop in mid-move and perform another one straight away.

So, will AM3's first real test stand up to Sega's incredibly high standards? Only time will tell, but we can say this — after testing *Last Bronx* out ourselves on a recent trip to Tokyo, we're already planning to put our names down for the Saturn version, due around late spring.



1 These guys are a bit nastier than those *Virtua* folks. 2 The changing vehs make for dynamic-looking action without interfering with the gameplay. 3 As well as using their own unique weapons, fighters also use traditional martial arts, such as Aikido and Jujitsu. 4 This dude's got crazy eyes, man.



1 The wooden sledgehammer can inflict serious damage on the opponent. 2 What the Japanese call a wooden sword is held and used like a baseball bat. 3 Characters can jump onto and off of the fence for special leaping attacks.

Some day all video games will be this good.
You wish.

WIPACOUT
XL

STREET RACER

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It's a battle.
It's a blast.
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Destruction Derby 2

SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION, PC
PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS
DEVELOPER: REFLECTIONS
RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Forget the first game — the sequel is going to blow it away

The best of the PlayStation's launch titles belonged to Psygnosis, and now, one year later, the sequels are on their way. While other companies are still struggling to reach the quality of Psygnosis' first round of titles, *Wipeout XL* and *Destruction Derby 2* are breaking through to new levels of quality.

Despite the success of the first *DD*, there were many flaws, and the developers at Reflections aimed to remedy all of the problems and up the graphics even more. Criticisms of the first included polygon clipping (especially the barriers), poor



1 Wicked crashes and flipping cars are key in *DD2*, but the upgrade in racing is what is going to make *DD2* so universally loved. 2 Those ridiculous ten-car pileups are still included, and they look better than ever! 3 Unlike *DD1*, you can repair your damage by going into the pits.



The cars now flip and roll in real-time, unlike other racing games that have pre-set crashes.



1 The cars in the sequel have been completely redesigned to give them a less-boxy look. 2 The cars crumple on impact and lose doors, hoods, and trunks, along with catching fire and exploding. The crash engine and graphics are unequalled.

handling, poor racing, boring tracks, and poor replay value. For each one of these critiques, *DD2* appears to have a solid solution. The barriers are now completely solid, the cars handle more like *Sega Rally*, the tracks are much more complex, and the

addition of pit stops, optional track routes and stunt tricks makes the replay value much higher.

One of the biggest differences according to Martin Edmunson, the producer of *DD1* and *DD2*, is that, 'In *DD1*, the cars just stayed stuck to the ground, but in *DD2* we've come up with ways to flip and crash the cars in real-time.

Plus we wanted to add extra things to the damage so you could throw off things like the hood and the trunk'. Believe it or not, the game's crashes are even more amazing! Real-time damage even goes as far as the engine catching fire and the car exploding. With the full 3D crashes and tracks, it's possible to drive the car up on two wheels and skid along on the hood. Add in visual effects like a lens-flare

from the sun, real-time light-sourcing, transparencies, and twice the number of polygons on each car and you have a game that looks and plays twice as good as the original, which should be the goal of every sequel!

The Tracks

With a plethora of new courses, now with banks, dips, and jumps, *plus* superior handling, *DD2* is set to blaze a new trail for racing games. The tracks are now up to eight times longer, with much more interesting scenery.



There are other video games that you could buy.
Like you care.

WIPEOUT XL

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of racing...
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3-D autocide!
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of high-velocity,
demolition derby
where you shoot first
and overtake later. Pick up lasers,
mines, smart bombs and heatseeking
missiles...then put the pedal to the metal and
waste the competition. It's kill or be roadkill!

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ROAD HOGS FIGHT
TO AN ICY DEATH!



CRASH AND BURN ON
THE INTERSTELLAR HIGHWAY!



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IN-YOUR-FACE DEATH RACE!



USE EXPLODING FIREWALLS
TO CLEAN UP YOUR
REAR-VIEW MIRROR!

PLAYSTATION SEGA SATURN



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Star Gladiator

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION, ARCADE

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Capcom's first 3D fighting game is out there — way out there

Still reeling over its success with the *Street Fighter Alpha* series, Capcom is looking to take the 3D plunge with *Star Gladiator*. While most expected the company's first 3D fighter to focus on the likes of Ryu, Ken, and Chun Li, Capcom opted instead for a

brand new series with a new cast of characters. *Star Gladiator* takes the formula over which Capcom has labored for years to perfect, and applies its most vital principles (namely responsive controls and



1-3 Reversals are a big part of the action, and are much easier to pull off than Alpha Counters.



The 3D graphics in *Star Gladiator* are spectacular, especially when you consider this is Capcom's first try at 3D.



1 The winning blow has that Capcom *Street Fighter* Super Combo Finish look to it.
2 Only in *Star Gladiator* will you see a dinosaur clubbing a green alien.

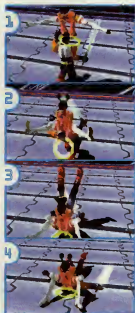
well-balanced characters) to a brand new genre. The results are certainly looking promising.

As for the new characters, don't expect another band of street toughs and martial artists. *Star Gladiator* is set in the distant future and the characters represent several different species, from birdmen to prehistoric dinosaurs.

With this kind of variety, it seems only natural that the game would boast some truly unusual fighting moves, and indeed it does. Attacks such as Zeldin's Sky Destruction take advantage of his flying abilities in a particularly brutal fashion. Also included is a unique counter-move system, which is not only easy to do, but pays off with dramatic effects. One final

exciting feature is the unique combo system which actually allows the player to see a read-out of each combo as it's being performed. Taking this approach, the player can master longer and more effective strategies on the fly. This feature also works to unlock the secret combinations which lead to the powerful Plasma attacks.

In the end, what's perhaps most exciting about *Star Gladiator* is the demonstrated ability by Capcom to compete in the 3D fighting game arena. Another important issue to consider with *Star Gladiator* is the fact that this is Capcom's first game developed from scratch on PlayStation hardware. While the Arcade version of the game is already out, the home version is very much the same game, and arcade fans are sure to love that.



1-4 The throws are shown from various Tekken-ish camera angles, and are a beauty to behold. June's crouching throw is a particular treat to watch...

Other "futuristic racing games" aren't WipeOut XL. Obviously.

WIPEOUT XL

Die Hard

Arcade

SYSTEM: ARCADE

PUBLISHER: SEGA Gameworks

DEVELOPER: SEGA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

RELEASE DATE: AUGUST

Sega's latest arcade release is a bit of a surprise because of the nature of its gameplay. The traditionally fighting and racing-minded company has decided to throw its hat into the side-scrolling action/fighting genre. The format of the game begs a comparison to the

seemingly endless supply of *Final Fight* clones, but what separates *Die Hard Arcade* from the crowd is the amount of control afforded to the player over the characters, not to mention the obvious introduction of true 3D graphics into the genre. A one or two player game, *Die Hard*

lets you play as either a policeman or policewoman, even though the action's much the same no matter who you choose. The characters, with more than 1,000 different animations, add a considerable variety to the fighting sequences.

Despite the 2D nature of the gameplay, the game does not disappoint graphically, with its full texture-mapped 3D polygon backgrounds and characters. One small complaint that may be voiced by arcade gamers is the lack of bloodshed. Either polygons don't bleed, or armed conflict is much more sanitary in the Sega universe. I mean, they're blowing each other to smithereens and not a drop!

Still, with the expanded control features of the gameplay, this game is no run-of-the-mill side-scroller. In

fact, *Die Hard Arcade* makes a serious run at being the best-looking and best-playing action/fighting game of all time.



The texture-mapped polygons add a nice touch of visual variety to the side-scrolling 'beat-'em-up' action.



1 Titan's ST-V architecture pumps out impressive graphics, and it also makes a Saturn conversion easier. 2 *Die Hard Arcade* boasts numerous character actions and fighting moves. 3 Shouldn't there be just a tad more blood when being shot by an anti-tank gun?



StarCraft

SYSTEM: PC CD-ROM

PUBLISHER: BLIZZARD

DEVELOPER: BLIZZARD

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER

From the early alpha versions we've been playing around the office, *StarCraft* looks to be a very cool title. The game uses the same engine as the smash hit *WarCraft II*, but it's in a science fiction universe, and has some major enhancements.

There are three races: humans, the Protoss and the Zergs. The Protoss are a powerful, ancient race, gifted with Psionic abilities, while the Zerg are biological masters, building their spaceships out of flesh and blood. The humans? Well, they're humans — what else can be said? War has broken out between these three rival races and,

unlike *WarCraft II*, where the orcs and human units were counterparts, having the same abilities but different graphics, the strengths, technologies and abilities of the units in *StarCraft* will differ greatly. There's also no planets — players must create their cities on space platforms, which they must build up on their own. You'll also be able to select up to twelve units at a time, three more than the original nine found in *WarCraft II*.

Other key features of the game include modem, serial or eight-player network play, as well as free online gaming on the battle.net server from

Blizzard looks like it has another hit on its hands.



1 As in *WarCraft II*, you control groups of units with a mouse. 2 What space combat game would be complete without some big explosions?



Gone are the orcs — *StarCraft* is set in space.

Fighting Vipers

SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SEGA AM2
RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER

Sure, the characters look goofy, but you can slam 'em into the cage!

Almost exactly a year ago, we were just getting our first look at Sega's awesome *Virtua Fighter 2* on the Saturn. This year, we're being treated to AM2's latest fighting game masterpiece, *Fighting Vipers*.

Reminiscent of the *Virtua Fighter* series in control, *Fighting Vipers* adds to the tried-and-true Sega formula with a couple of very important new features. Brand-new gameable elements, such as breakable body armor, air recovery moves and, most importantly,

3D cage matches, make *Fighting Vipers* a must for all fighting game fans.

As for the Saturn translation of this Model 2 arcade game (the same arcade board used for *Virtua Fighter 2*), the early results are promising. With the goals set even higher for the home conversion of *Fighting Vipers* than last year's *VF2*, the game is already displaying some impressive light-sourcing and gouraud shading. There is still a little room for improvement in the

resolution, but the gameplay is already dead-on, with the action just as fast and every move in place. If AM2 can manage to squeeze in just a little bit more of the arcade into the Saturn version before it's finished, then the game will be on track to push the



Saturn to new limits. Let's just hope that we don't have to wait another full year before the home version of Sega's next two arcade fighters—*Last Bronx* and *Virtua Fighter 3!*

Vasquez — oops, I mean 'Jene', is one mean lady, but it's tough to fight out of a corner, no matter who you are.



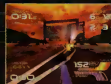
1-2 One of the key features in *Fighting Vipers* is the ability to knock off parts of your opponent's armor, thereby weakening their defense against future attacks. 3 Each character has at least one power-up attack that knocks their opponent flat. 4 Sorry, I just couldn't resist taking this screen. Do the bump!



1 Once you've beaten the last boss, you can play as him in the Arcade or Versus modes. 2 The light-sourcing looks fantastic, and the different stages find ways to show it off well. 3 I don't mean to nitpick, but I think I've seen Bahr's moves somewhere before...

WIPCOUT XL

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Privateer: the Darkening

SYSTEMS: PC CD-ROM
PUBLISHER: ORIGIN
DEVELOPER: ORIGIN SYSTEMS
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Following in the footsteps of the hugely popular *Wing Commander* series, *Privateer: The Darkening* will capitalize on the techniques learned during the making of *Wing Commander III* and *IV*. Combining Origin's usual high-quality full-motion video with a

brand-new flight engine, it looks, feels, and sounds like the best *Wing Commander* game yet. And with such stars as John Hurt, Amanda Pays and Christopher Walken, the acting should rank right up there with the other Origin hits.

But will fans of the original

Privateer (an open-ended game that lets players take on any role they chose in the *Wing Commander* universe) be disappointed? Well, although the game will necessarily be linear to fit to the video footage, a random scenario generator will also be included for people who want to strike out on their own (which also provides long-term replay value). As for the completely new flight engine, according to the associate producer, Starr Long, as of right now it's "...got a much higher frame rate than you'll find in the retail release, it's simply too fast!" That's good news for the disappointed multimedia who couldn't play *Wing Commander IV* on their older 486 machines because of its high system requirements.

1 Christopher Walken, known for *The Deer Hunter*, adds his considerable acting talents to the crew of *Privateer: The Darkening*. 2 What space combat interactive movie would be complete without some big explosions? 3 Not only does the FMV promise to be of the highest quality, but the special effects are worthy of any modern sci-fi movie.



As in the original *Privateer*, outfitting your ship according to what you can afford makes up a big part of the strategy.



Boosting an all-star cast and a new-and-improved *Wing Commander* engine, how can *Privateer* fail?



Andretti Racing

SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION, SATURN
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: STORMFRONT STUDIOS
RELEASE DATES: SEPTEMBER (PLAYSTATION), NOVEMBER (SATURN)

1 In season mode, the game totals points just as in a real racing circuit. 2 A split-screen mode is offered for those not able to take advantage of the two-player link mode. 3 The realistic competition shows individual character and a ferocity missing in many racing games.

The differences between Indy and Stock car racing are far more than cosmetic.



Heating up the already intense competition, *Andretti Racing* from Electronic Arts is another step towards the top for the one-time indisputable sports king. While the comparisons have already started between *Andretti Racing* and *Psygnosis'* forthcoming *Formula 1*, it's still too early to call either one a clear winner. Certainly, the progress on *Andretti* so far puts it in a simi-

lar class which has to be seen as encouraging. According to the game's makers, "The goal is to recreate perfectly the experience of being down on the track." The early results are a clear demonstration of this kind of effort.

Highlights of the game include two very distinct racing classes (Indy Car and Stock Car), sixteen tracks, and vicious competition. Graphically, the game doesn't make the most impressive use of the PlayStation we've seen, but it's pretty good and could still get even better. So far, it's the realistic gameplay, aided by actual consultation from the Andretti family, that makes *Andretti Racing* such a hopeful prospect, and with that in place, the rest is almost negligible.

With sixteen varied tracks, *Andretti Racing* offers a host of new challenges for even the most seasoned racing fan.

Rocket Jockey

SYSTEMS PC CD-ROM
PUBLISHERS ROCKET SCIENCE
DEVELOPERS ORIGIN SYSTEMS
RELEASE DATE NOVEMBER

Nothing feels better than getting dragged around at over 80 MPH!

One of the many new titles Rocket Science will be releasing within the next few months is *Rocket Jockey*. The game takes place within an arena or stadium, with players slugging it out on 'rocket bikes', which can perform various stunts. For example, by using special cables attached to your rocket, you can slingshot yourself around the arena poles to get tactical positioning.

There are many ways one can get pummeled in this game. Cables can be placed between two poles to clothesline the other competitors, or you can simply use your cable to snag someone right off his rocket. Either way, the results are hilarious and highly satisfying.

The game moves at an incredibly frantic pace and runs at a pretty high frame rate. But what's *really* cool is that



Rocket Science has told us that a network option for multi-player use will be implemented before final release. Just imagine how cool it could be to drag your buddy around by your cable while he's screaming profanities right next to you!

Look for *Rocket Jockey* to ship around the fourth quarter for PC, and early 1997 for the Playstation. Let's just hope that the Playstation version will include link-up capability!



Hit your opponent hard enough and you can send him flying off his bike.



1 Slingshotting around corners is the key to getting around in this game. 2 'Whoa! That's gotta hurt!' 3 With a well-timed cable-lass, you can even grab your opponents right off their bikes!

NICE PUNCH.

Unfortunately, he has an iron jaw (and a rocket launcher).

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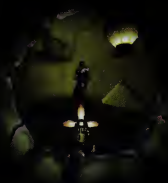
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YOUR MIND IS THE ULTIMATE WEAPON...

YOUR MIND IS THE ULTIMATE WEAPON...



Soviet Strike

SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION, SATURN

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS

DEVELOPER: EA STUDIOS

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Forget perestroika, it's time to rock!

For enthusiasts of destruction, few games have ever matched the pure visceral satisfaction provided by the *Strike* series. If anything, these games should be required playing for disgruntled postal workers everywhere (a little stress relief goes a long way).

Electronic Arts offers a bevy of graphical and gameplay enhancements that pulls the classic gameplay of the *Strike* series into the 32-bit generation. Each of the five battle scenarios are filled with a number of mission objectives and an impressive array of buildings, weapons, and enemies. The use of wire frame 3D models and textures based on actual topographic maps allow *Soviet Strike* to boast some of the most realistic and beautiful landscapes yet seen on the next-generation systems. There are even some FMV sequences that seem to buck the norm by featuring a compelling visual style and competent acting. Electronic Arts

should be further commended for the restrained use of these clips, which offer battlefield status reports as well as in-game clues.

But the most exciting addition in *Soviet Strike* may be the enhanced AI which has the enemy pursuing mission objectives of their own. The player's strategy must now conform to the new battlefield dynamics and adjust to the enemies' movements and strategies. Combined with the intuitive classic *Strike* gameplay, this enhancement should mean that *Soviet Strike* will feature unprecedented levels of enjoyment, challenge and, best of all, gratuitous destruction!



The graphics are amazing, using real-life photos mapped over a true 3D polygon environment.

Interview with

Michael Kosaka

Producer, Soviet Strike



1 All of the scenarios were carefully plotted out on battle maps prior to programming.
2 Unlike some of the previous *Strikes*, the assault chopper is the only attack vehicle at your disposal.
3 An enhanced AI means the enemy no longer patiently waits for you to dispose of them — they have their own agenda.

Q: What elements of the classic gameplay from the 16-bit *Strike* series will be retained or deleted for *Soviet Strike*?

A: We're keeping the same general gameplay view, but adding a 'chase plane' view along with the 'classic *Strike*' view.

We're keeping the same depth of story, but also adding new and exciting story video and state-of-the-art graphics. We're maintaining the 'thinking man's shooter' mentality, but adding new and challenging puzzles and missions.

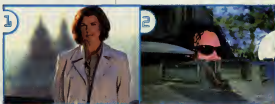
Q: One of the immediately noticeable aspects of *Soviet Strike* is the highly detailed landscapes. How was this effect achieved?

A: The photo-realistic ground effects were created by EA staff artists. Reference data was derived from aerial photography, actual European site photos, and numerous technical sources. The display programming is a new EA-created 'streaming' technology that pulls data off of the CD-ROM disk quickly and effortlessly.

Q: Many 32-bit games have featured dazzling graphics and gameplay, but have been lacking in the depth department. With just five levels in the game, doesn't *Soviet Strike* leave itself open to this criticism?

A: Within each of the five scenarios are five to ten missions. Each mission is a complex series of tasks and puzzle-solving. You can choose your own strategic method of completing the game. This game will not be easy.

1 FMV clips (with competent actors, even!) help to advance the storyline and provide valuable information. 2 A member of the development team does a little 'hands on' research.



1 Superb explosions, the satisfying payoffs of the *Strike* series' gameplay, are back in full force. 2 The level of detail in the game environment lives up to 32-bit expectations. 3 *Soviet Strike* is filled with an exhilarating array of objects to eliminate. 4 *Burnish ULTRA GP* prepares to exact revenge on the Love Boat for years of cruel and unusual televised punishment.

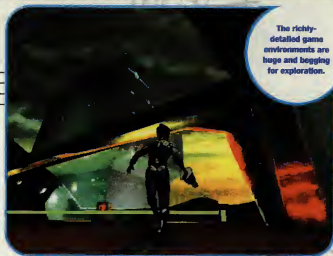
MDK

PLATFORM: PC
PUBLISHER: PLAYMATES INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER: SHINY ENTERTAINMENT
RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER

The first PC title to come from those *Earthworm Jim* guys at Shiny, *MDK* is a 3D action/adventure game that rivals (and perhaps surpasses) any similar gaming experience on home console systems.



Zoom in on the target until you can see the orange of his eyes, and then it's 'hasta la vista, baby!'



The richly-detailed game environments are huge and begging for exploration.

those who prefer the focus on action.

One of the most entertaining control features in the game is the ability to switch to an inside-the-helmet view. The helmet view allows the player to

zoom in on targets off in the distance to pick them off. Three secondary screens in the helmet track shots taken at the enemy, and even allow the player to see the impacts.

MDK serves as an impressive precursor of 3D PC games to come. The fluid character control and movement, the elaborate 3D settings, and the exquisite graphics show that the PC is well up to the task of offering the gun-play experiences previously reserved for home console systems (which, by the way, Shiny is taking a hard look at for conversion).

1 *MDK's* smooth 3D gunplay may have console owners suffering PC envy. 2 Deploy the ribbon chute to float down upon enemies. 3 Using the in-helmet view, you can pick off targets from far away.

Perfect Weapon

SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION, SATURN
PUBLISHER: ASC GAMES
DEVELOPER: GRAY MATTER
RELEASE DATE: FALL

Described by the developers as a cross between *Resident Evil* and *Tekken*, *Perfect Weapon* is a 3D adventure game that attempts to fuse the best elements of two popular genres.

However, the early version of

Perfect Weapon did exhibit some glaring deficiencies. The 3D environments aren't very interactive, and the main character's movements are a little stiff, even when he is merely running from one scene to the next. Add to that the very real danger of

creating a mixed-genre game that dilutes the best aspects of each respective genre, and the challenges facing the game are considerable.

But the good news is that there does seem to be reason for excitement. *Perfect Weapon* features some of the most beautiful 3D environments ever created for a PlayStation game. It's also got a unique AI that allows enemies to cooperate and fight strategically. If the proper dose of gameplay 'magic' can be administered, *Perfect Weapon* can indeed be a game that features the best of two worlds.

The alien environments in the game feature many beautiful awe-inspiring sights.

1 *Perfect Weapon* features five visually-stunning hostile worlds.

2 Gameplay can best be described as a 3D action-adventure/fighting game. 3 Puzzles help to add some variety.

4 Aliens use five-on-one gang up tactics when fighting.



Ten Pin Alley

NOVEMBER 1996
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Tobal

The next step in fighting games?

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: SONY
DEVELOPER: DREAM FACTORY
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

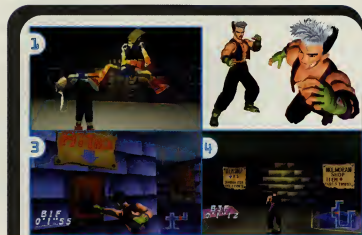


With the release of *Tekken 2*, many a PlayStation owner was probably thinking their 3D fighting game dreams had been answered for the year. However, it seems as though a new chapter is about to be written in the genre with *Tobal No. 1*. When the rumors started flying that designers from the *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken* teams were working on *Tobal*, fighting game fans the world over suddenly became very interested. While there are still unsubstantiated rumors about specifically who the team members are, the President of Dream Factory and the producer of *Tobal*, Seichi Ishii, were indeed involved on a very deep level with the original *Virtua Fighter* team, as well as both *Tekken* and *Tekken 2*.

While even Ishii concedes that the state of 3D fighting games is still not to the level of the 2D genre, he has made it a point to take *Tobal No. 1* beyond what has been done before. Ishii believes that fighting games need to move beyond the traditional platforms and this is why he has included a Quest Mode in *Tobal*. In this mode, the player moves through a dungeon-like maze, battling enemies along the way in full fighting-game style.

Additionally, what *Tobal* offers beyond any other 3D fighting game is full 3D movement at all times. Ishii sought to conquer what he calls "the limited 3D access problems of games like *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken*." And, when asked how he managed to conquer the problem when no one else could, his answer was

simply, "because of good programming." One factor that's come into question is the lack of texture maps in lieu of the 60fps animation. While Ishii suggests, "The first (visual) impact might be weakened...", he goes on to state that the trade-off is to the player's benefit. Trust us, this is definitely one to keep an eye on.



1 The graphics may look a little plain, but just wait until you see these guys in motion!
2 The characters in *Tobal* were designed by Akira Toriyama, best known for *Dragonball* in Japan. 3-4 The Quest mode plays like a "fighting RPG". By completing dungeons, you open up new playable characters in the normal Arcade and Versus modes.



1 The alien world is just gorgeous. 2 This is perhaps the first true 3D fighter, since you can move in any direction with the D-Pad. 3 The characters are weird. 4 Grabbing is very detailed. 4 Grabbing is part of the game's appeal.



1 Throw your tail around too much, and eventually someone will pay you back. 2 The attacks in *Tobal* are separated into three categories: high, medium, and low. Combine a high attack with dashing, and you get something like this. 3 Many of the moves aren't completely original, but they sure look good in hi-res. 4 That's one big pig.

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exist."

According to the government it is preposterous to believe that such a game as AREA 51 exists. Concerning allegations of a top secret experiment gone bad, resulting in mutating alien creatures, authorities were unavailable for comment. Unidentified sources state AREA 51 has developed advanced technologies of mysterious nature: 3D rendered graphics, live digitized action and stop frame animation. All have been denied by high level officials. As for a home invasion of the #1 ARCADE GAME, the Pentagon asserts there is absolutely no documentation pertaining to this rumor.

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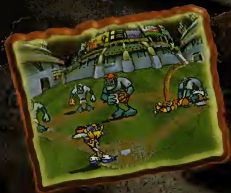


you can't get in but you can take it home.



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Turok

The first N64 *Doom*-game may not be *Doom*, but you shouldn't be dissatisfied

SYSTEM: NINTENDO 64

PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM

DEVELOPER: IGUANA

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

The Nintendo 64 has already shown gamers what a beast of a machine it is, but it's Iguana that is planning on showing the rest of the world exactly what a BEAST looks like on the Nintendo 64.

With some of the most realistic graphics ever seen on a console system, *Turok* is a completely polygonal 3D shooter in the mold of *Doom*, but it has taken the mold, broken it and created an entirely different benchmark in the genre. Previously, 3D shooters like *Doom* and *Wolfenstein* were created for the PC first and then ported over to home consoles. With *Turok*, Iguana is creating a 3D shooter that fully utilizes all the speed and polygon pushing of

Nintendo's flagship system, and the result is an astonishing game that, if finished up properly, could show exactly how powerful the N64 is.

In a recent trip to Iguana's offices in Austin, Texas, *Ultra GP* got an opportunity to sit down with the developers, play through the game, and get a look at what's still to be done. There was only one fully-playable level (seven are scheduled), that had Turok rampaging through a forest, destroying dinosaurs, mutants, and humans alike. The fogging effect, crisp music, and fully-3D environment set the stage, while

the motions of the enemies and the unreal effects transported the player into a truly scary world. After the first level, we had a chance to see the most amazing-looking boss creature ever. A giant mutant T-Rex, equipped with

a laser sight and wicked flame-throwing breath, rapidly chased the player around a room full of grates and catwalks.

Plans for some of the later levels include an underwater portion, ancient ruins, and a tree-top level, not to mention some more amazing bosses.

Each enemy in the game has their own AI. Surprising the enemy depends on its hearing and vision. For example, if you're running through the forest, the enemies

1-2 You don't just pick on dinosaurs — you've got to deal with enemies from the future, as well as the past.



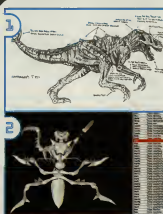
Basically, you walk through the rainforest, blowing away soldiers, robots and dinos with a huge arsenal. Cool.



1-4 With Turok, Acclaim finally gets to use its high-end motion capture studio for more than just the latest side-scrolling movie game. Just take a look at this poor beast on the business end of Turok's rifle. Enemies will reel back from a hit, then squirm around a bit until they finally flop to the ground.

hear you and react, but if you walk quietly and kill with a traditional Indian weapon, it's possible to sneak up and kill the enemies from behind. With

gameplay features like that and graphics that blow away any other 3D shooter, *Turok* is set to give N64 gamers a real treat.



In Progress

Much of the game still hasn't been finished yet, but we managed to grab an early look at some of the game's cooler beasts. Just wait until you see these guys at full speed!

1 The T-Rex boss may very end up being the most complex and impressive-looking polygon creature ever shown on the home screen. 2-3 Here we see some early test models of *Turok*'s enemies. The textures haven't been added yet, but they already look good.



1 The big bad T-Rex is as menacing as they come. The fire effects look absolutely stunning. 2 The enemies look nice and smooth even close-up, thanks to the N64's smooth graphics. 3 Robots may not bleed, but they fall down just as hard. 4 That's gotta hurt! A point-blank bullet to the head is never a good way to start a day out.

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VMX Racing

SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION, SATURN
PUBLISHER: PLAYMATES INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
DEVELOPER: STUDIO E
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Realism can be an important aspect to any game, especially when it's attempting to translate an actual, human event into a gaming experience. Playmates has injected as much realism as possible into *VMX Racing*, its new motocross racer due in November.

Playmates is the first to admit

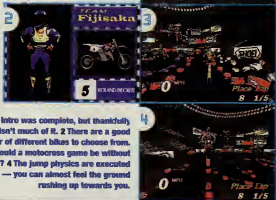
the inherent problems in making a realistic motocross game. 'Motocross is difficult to capture right because it's physics-based,' says VMX producer Dave Hoffman. 'We tried to capture that realism.' And they aren't kidding. The tracks are based on actual indoor and outdoor professional courses, as are the

bikes themselves.

Apparently, two developers even bought motocross bikes themselves to get the feel of riding a bike just right. There are still some bugs to work out however, but Playmates has assured us that the early version we tested was far from complete. With a little work, *VMX Racing* could turn into a solid motocross experience.



The track in Gahu takes you right through the jungle. However, the 'jungle' still needs a little work.



Breath of Fire III

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
RELEASE DATE: SECOND QUARTER '97

Capcom continues its resurgence on 32-bit systems with a much-needed RPG exclusively for the PlayStation. *Breath Of Fire III* takes a similar story and gameplay approach of the first two titles and adds all that one would expect from a 32-bit game.

The game has true polygonal 3D backgrounds for the sprite-based characters to explore. The player can change the camera angle on the fly to reveal hidden treasures and secret passages. The animations and music are also a marked improvement over any other RPGs (excluding *Final Fantasy VII*, which is amazing). According to Chris

Kramer of Capcom, '*Breath Of Fire III* builds on the history and success of the first two, while adding the 3D elements and a much bigger world'. Looks good.



1 The streets of this town may be empty, but there's plenty going on behind closed doors. 2 Fighting is still seen from the same 3/4 perspective made popular in the first two games. 3 Let's hope the story is deep.

You travel the longer distances on this map screen. Ahh, RPGs... It's good to finally see you on the PlayStation.





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Final Fantasy VII

SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHERS: SQUARE
DEVELOPER: SQUARE
RELEASE DATE: SPRING 1997

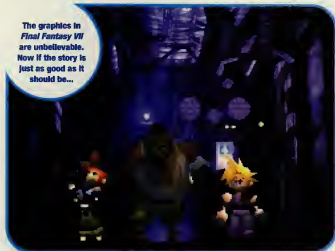
The Japanese-released demo hints at a new benchmark in RPG games

As if the waiting wasn't already killing you, the demo of Square's first 32-bit *Final Fantasy* game, included with the Japanese release of *Tobal No. 1*, is sure to send you over the edge. Set against the stark back-grounds of a futuristic, industrial metropolis, *Final Fantasy VII* is a significant departure from the well-known fantasy series. According to series producer, Hironobu Sakaguchi, 'As far as the technology is concerned, the previous games (hardware) were not able to handle this kind of power.' As for those beautiful graphics, Sakaguchi says there's more the game than just a pretty face, 'We worked hard to merge the CG graphics and the gameplay.' The result is a truly cinematic effect,

wherein the player is immersed in a 3D landscape of such incredible detail and vision that he completely loses himself in the adventure.

As for the gameplay, experienced *Final Fantasy* players will feel right at home with features such as real-time battles, vast map screens and a story-line filled with complexities and sub-plots. In fact, when asked if the story-line would still be the game's overall emphasis, Sakaguchi's answer was a quickly-fired, 'Yes, of course.' As for the technical achievements in the game, he suggests, 'Square programmers have worked hard to improve on load time, and it is just as fast as the mass ROM games (cartridge games) that you've seen in the past.' Another technical issue addressed by the game's makers is that of the camera control. While the team insists it would have been very possible to allow the player to control the camera manually, '...we have chosen to set the camera in a professional manner, allowing for a movie feel.'

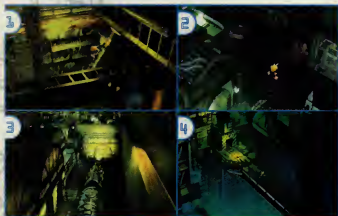
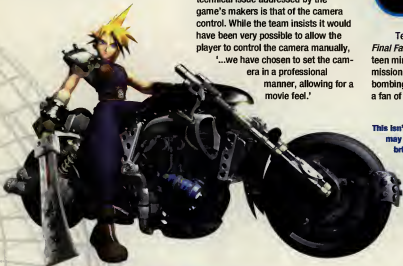
The graphics in *Final Fantasy VII* are unbelievable. Now if the story is just as good as it should be...



Technical wizardry aside, the *Final Fantasy VII* demo takes about fifteen minutes to finish, featuring a mission that has Cloud and his party bombing a power plant. If you're a fan of the series, then playing

the demo only makes things worse, especially for American game players who have to wait until next spring.

This isn't the *Final Fantasy* you may remember. Gone are the bright green forests and baby-blue skies; *FFVII* is a gritty urban tale that trades away its towns and villages for industrial plants and back-alleys.



1 Depending on the environment, your character will automatically hop over holes or climb down ladders as you run along. 2 Cloud and Barret go over their plan before starting the mission. 3 The beginning FMV rendered intro runs seamlessly into the start of the game, where you arrive by train. 4 The settings have a very 'industrial' feel.

1 The spellcasting in *FFVII* is a special effects dream. Aerith's 'Water Dragon' magic is a great example. First she summons the dragon... 2 ...who rears back its ugly head, and... 3 ...throws a huge tidal wave at the bad guys! 4 There aren't many enemies who can take that kind of punishment and still come back fighting. The only downside is that this spell drains almost all of Aerith's Magic Points. Oh well, spend 'em if you got 'em.





As Cloud, you've got a pretty harsh-looking team under your command. Just like *Final Fantasy VII*'s on-screen graphics, the game's conceptual and promotional artwork are a departure from previous games in the series. Gone are the light, fairy-tale pencil sketches that gained so much popularity instead. These new illustrations are solid, bold reflections of the game's darker nature.



The battle scenes all take place in real time — your enemy doesn't wait for you to think things through all day.

Here's how the character illustrations translate into the real polygon models. While there isn't very much use of texture maps, the shading is excellent, and their faces even animate to show different expressions.



1-3 The pure vision behind *Final Fantasy VII* is amazing. Each and every screen was tediously rendered to perfection, as you can tell by these CG illustrations. With such detailed landscapes as these, it's easy to understand why Square needed to put the game on two discs.



The camera constantly zooms in and out during battles, creating a very cinematic feel for the action.

Big, Ugly Monsters

With two CDs, *Final Fantasy VII* is chock-full of the nastiest bad guys you'll ever toss a spell at.



1 Barret lets a giant flying insect have it with his arm-cannon. 2-3 Because of the constantly-changing camera angles, the battle scenes can get really up-close and personal. After you decide your battle strategy, the characters get in close and fight instead of kicking and punching from opposite corners. 4 That's one really big crab.

Release List

* NOTE: All release dates are subject to change at any time

OCTOBER

Nintendo 64

Cruiser USA - Williams Entertainment
Monitor Dunk 64 - Mindscape
Mortal Combat Trilogy - Williams Entertainment
NBA Hang Time - Williams Entertainment

PlayStation

Aaron vs. Ruth Bassball - Mindscape
Area 51 - Williams Entertainment
Blast Chamber - Activision
Carnage Heart - Sony CE
Chronicles of the Sword - Sony CE
Dark Forces - Lucas Arts
Darknet - ASC
Deliver - Williams Entertainment
Epidemic - Sony CE
Final Doom - Williams Entertainment
Golden Nugget - Virgin
GT Football - Gametek
High Velocity - Atlas Software
Judge Dredd - Activision
Legacy of Kain - Crystal Dynamics
Marvel Super Heroes - Capcom
Mortal Combat Trilogy - Williams Entertainment
NFL '97 - Electronic Arts
Perfect Weapon - ASC
Pitfall - Accolade
Rebel Assault II - Lucas Arts
Samurai Showdown 3 - Sony CE
Soviet Strike - Electronic Arts
Specs Jam - Activision
Star Wind - Mindscape
Street Fighter Alpha 2 - Capcom
Super Motorcross - Activision
The Crow - Activision
Time Machine - Activision
TNX 4x4 - ASC
Turnel B1 - Ocean
VR Golf - Interplay
Warren: The Apocalypse - Capcom
WWF in House - Lucas Arts
2Xtreme - Sony CE
3D Baseball - Crystal Dynamics

Saturn

Aerial Striker - Atlas Software
Area 51 - Williams Entertainment
Blast Chamber - Activision
Blazing Heroes - Sega
Dark Forces - Lucas Arts
Dark Sun - Data East
Darknet - ASC
Devil Summoner - Atlas Software
Dragon Force - Working Designs
Fighting Vipers - Sega
GT Basketball - Gametek
Hell - Gametek
Iron & Blood - Activision
Jeopardy - Gametek
Judge Dredd - Activision
Loaded - Interplay
Mr. Bones - Sega

NHL '97 - Electronic Arts
Rebel Assault II - Lucas Arts
Space Jam - Activision
Storm - ASC
Street Fighter Alpha 2 - Capcom
Super Motorcross - Activision
Syndicate Wars - Electronic Arts
The Crow - Activision
Three Dirty Dwarves - Sega
Turnel B1 - Ocean
Virtua Cop 2 - Doan
Werewolf: The Apocalypse - Capcom
Wheel of Fortune - Gametek
World Series Baseball 2 - Sony CE
WWF in House - Activision
3D Baseball - Crystal Dynamics

PC

Archimedes Dynasty - Blue Byte Software
Clue - Hasbro Interactive
Constructor (Win 95) - Williams Entertainment
Dominion (Win 95) - 7th Level
Madden NFL '97 (Win 95) - Electronic Arts
NCAA Basketball - GTE Interactive
Offroad - Hasbro Interactive
Roboblox X (Win 95) - Williams Entertainment
Star Trek Generations (Win 95) - Spectrum HoloByte
Star Trek Generations - GTE Interactive
Timepieces - Hasbro Interactive
Ultimate Fighter PC - SegaSoft
War Gods (Win 95) - Williams Entertainment
9 - GT Software

Genesis

Lobo - Ocean
Madden NFL '97 - Electronic Arts
The Flintstones - Ocean
Ultimate MK3 - Williams Entertainment

Super NES

College Football USA '97 - Toy Headquarters
Lobo - Ocean
Madden NFL '97 - Electronic Arts
Ultimate MK3 - Williams Entertainment

NOVEMBER

Nintendo 64

Tekno Phalar - Nintendo
Turk the Dinosaur Hunter - Activision
War Gods - Williams Entertainment
Wayne Gretzky Hockey - Williams Entertainment

PlayStation

Allied Generals - Mindscape
Ark of Time - Koei
Batman Forever - Activision
Battlesport - Activision
Buboy 3D - Accolade
Contra: Legacy of War - Konami
Deadly Skies - JVC
Destruction Derby 2 - Psygnosis
Disruptor - Universal Interactive
Formula 1 - Psygnosis
Grand Theft Auto - BMG Interactive
Hyperslam - Activision
Jet Moto - Sony CE

Killing Time - Activision
Legends Football '97 - Accolade
Machinist - EIDOS Interactive
Majic: The Gathering - Activision
Major Damage - Capcom
Mortal Combat 2 - Activision
Namco Museum Vol. 2 - Namco-Hometek
NBA Hang Time - Williams Entertainment
NBA Jam Extreme - Activision
NBA Live '97 - Electronic Arts
Neoromance - Mindscape
NFL Faceoff '97 - Sony CE
NFL Gamday '97 - Sony CE
NFL Open Ice - Williams Entertainment
Pandemonium - Crystal Dynamics
Roboblox X - Williams Entertainment
Shining Sword - American Laser Games
Soul Edge - Namco-Hometek
Soul Power - Atlas Software
Spawm - Sony CE
Star Outlaws - Capcom
T-MEX - Williams Entertainment
Tempest X - Interplay
Ten no Kiseki - ASC
Total No. 1 - Sony CE
Turk Readers - EIDOS Interactive
Twisted Metal 2 - Sony CE
War Gods - Williams Entertainment
Wing Commander IV - Origin
Wipeout XL - Psygnosis

Saturn

Andretti Racing - Electronic Arts
Batman Forever - Activision
Battlesport - Activision
Buboy 3D - Accolade
Bug Toot - Sega
Contra: Legacy of War - Konami
Cruiser - Origin
Dark Savior - Sega
Daytona Championship Circuit Edition - Sega
Daytona Championship Circuit Edition - Sega
FIFA Soccer '97 - Electronic Arts
Grand Theft Auto - BMG Interactive
Heart of Darkness - Sega
Killing Time - Activision
Magic Knight Rayearth - Working Designs
Majic: The Gathering - Activision
Major Damage - Capcom
NBA Jam Extreme - Activision
NBA Live '97 - Electronic Arts
NFL '97 - Sega
Pinky And The Brain - Konami
Policenauts - Sega
Sacred Poets - Sega
Sonic X-Force - Sega
Soviet Strike - Electronic Arts
Tempest X - Interplay
The Crow - Activision
Tomb Raiders - EIDOS Interactive
Virtua On - Sega
Wing Commander 3 - Origin
Worldwide Soccer 2 - Sega

PC

Battlesport (Win 95) - Hasbro Interactive
Constructor - Williams Entertainment
Incamade - Williams Entertainment
Juggler II - Interplay
NFL Open Ice (Win 95) - Williams Entertainment
Rek (Win 95) - Hasbro Interactive
Star Trek Generations - MicroProse
Titanic (Win 95) - GTE Interactive
VR Baseball - Interplay

Genesis

FIFA '97 Gold - Electronic Arts
NBA Hang Time - Williams Entertainment
NBA Live '97 - Electronic Arts
Sonic Blast - Sega
Vectorman 2 - Sega

Super NES

Dunkin' Kong Country 3 - Nintendo
FIFA '97 Gold - Electronic Arts
NBA Hang Time - Williams Entertainment
NBA Live '97 - Electronic Arts
NFL '97 - Toy Headquarters

DECEMBER

Nintendo 64

Blast Corps - Nintendo
Body Count - Nintendo
Buggle Boogie - Nintendo
Cruiser - Nintendo
Dark Heretic Order - Williams Entertainment
Golden Eye - Nintendo
Killer Instinct 64 - Nintendo
Silver Squadron (Win 95) - Williams Ent.
Star Wars Shadows of the Empire - Lucas Arts
Wave Race 64 - Nintendo

PlayStation

Broken Helix - Konami
Burning Blood - Playmates Interactive Ent.
Idols in Space - ASC
Kumite: The Fighter's Edge - Konami
Marvel 2099 - Mindscape
NBA in the Zone 2 - Konami
Pool Shark - Mindscape
Red Asphalt - Interplay
Reloaded - Interplay
Road Rage - Konami
Sign of the Sun - Koei
Slayer - Mindscape
Storm - ASC
Surreal - ASC
TNX Bass '97 - ASC
VMX Racing - Playmates Interactive Ent.
VR Pool - Interplay

Saturn

Descent - Interplay
Enemy Zero - Warp
Extreme Pinball - Electronic Arts
Mars T.T. - Sega
Marvel Super Heroes - Capcom
Project Overkill - Konami
VR Pool - Interplay

PC

Daytona USA - SegaSoft
MLK - Playmates Interactive Ent.
Ride - Interplay
Serpents Strike - Working Designs
Starcraft - Blizzard Ent.
Starcraft Anniversary - Interplay
Ultima Online - Origin
Virtua City 97 - SegaSoft
X-Wing vs. The Fighter - Lucas Arts

Genesis

X-Women - Sega



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THE FUTURE OF MULTIPLAYER GAMING

Anyone who has ever played a fighting game can tell you that playing against another person is against another person is way more fun than playing a computer.

And anyone who has played Super Bomberman II knows that the more players involved, the more fun the game becomes. Sure, Doom or Descent are fun on the PlayStation, but even then you can only link up to one other person. To get the maximum enjoyment from them, or any other multiplayer game, you need to play on a PC network with up to seven other people. Of course, the only places most of us can access PC networks is at school or work — two places that traditionally frown on playing games. So, unless you have a very understanding boss or computer technician, you're kind of cut out of the multiplayer games loop, right? Wrong.

Not only is multi-user gaming coming to home PCs, it's coming to consoles as well. And though it may seem like a no-brainer to use the Internet as an easy way of connecting lone systems, there are challenges, the most significant of which may be latency.

LATENCY

The word to know here is "latency" — the time it takes info to get from your machine to a machine over the network and back. Even a half-second latency is a major problem. Imagine if it took half a second between pulling a move in Tekken II and your character executing it, and you begin to grasp the magnitude of the problem. The reason for high latency times is the structure of the Internet itself. The

GAMING SERVICES

There are now several Internet-based gaming services gearing up for operation. Not only will they provide an easy way to find opponents for the hottest multiplayer games, each has a strategy for beating latency. All of the competing services will provide some common functionality. You'll be able to chat with other users to set up games, keep track of your stats in different games, and

find news and information about gaming and other interests. You'll also be able to enter contests and gaming competitions. Where the services differ is in their latency-beating strategies, the games they support, and the extra services they offer. Many games will be exclusive to one service — you'll be able to install that service's software from inside the game and log on automatically. That doesn't necessarily mean you won't be able to play those games on other services, but it will probably be a little harder to connect. The game to play on a ser-

vice that supports it unofficially. Here's an "at a glance" run-down of each of the major online multiplayer gaming services that will be starting up over the next six months or so. Unlike AOL, CompuServe or other traditional online services, most gaming services will not charge a monthly access fee, so it won't be a problem to belong to more than one. Just how much will you pay? It's unclear. Only one service is up right now, and the others have made no announcements regarding price. Here's our prediction: expect to pay \$2 - \$5 per hour for actual playing time, with the rest of the time you are online (chatting, reading news, etc.) being underwritten by ads. That charge is

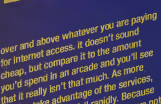
over and above whatever you are paying for Internet access. It doesn't sound cheap, but compare it to the amount you'd spend in an arcade and you'll see that it really isn't that much. As more gamers take advantage of the services, prices will begin to fall rapidly. Because this field is changing so fast, we have not listed the games supported by each service — that info would be out of date by the time you got the magazine. We suggest that you visit each site and check it out for yourself.

THE TOP TEN

MULTIPLAYER GAMES

* Compiled by the Editors of PC Gamer, NEXT Generation and ULTRA GP

1. Quake
2. Warcraft II
3. Duke Nukem 3D
4. Doom 2
5. Diablo
6. Descent
7. Sim City 2000
8. CivNet
9. Terminal Velocity
10. Ultima Online



ENGAGE

<http://www.gamesonline.com/>

Engage is a spin-off of InterPlay, makers of Descent, although they have several other partners.

Like MPath, Engage has a deal with a low latency network provider, Concentric Network. Thus, you'll be able to access Engage either through the Internet, or by using Concentric's extremely fast direct dial-in fiber optic network (think of Concentric as a 'private Internet'), which is available in most major metropolitan areas. If you don't have access to the Internet, don't worry; you'll be able to access Engage's content through Prodigy and America Online (although that will presumably involve a big speed hit).

In addition to having several key exclusives, like WarCraft

II, Engage is doing something slightly different than the other services. Instead of only providing a service that enables you to play multiplayer games you already own, Engage will have several original games available only on the service, like a Caesar's Palace casino simulator, and Spatterball, from Interworld productions. Engage should also have online multiplayer Bomberman — we can't wait.

The strategy of providing original content appeals to us, since it gives a value to the service beyond their exclusive arrangements with other software publishers. The InterPlay ware publishers. The InterPlay connection is also a plus, but we worry that attempting to compete with players using slow AOL or Prodigy link-ups could be a headache.



TOTAL ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK

<http://www.ten.net/>

TEN is already the 600-pound gorilla of the multiplayer game services, with hot exclusives for games like Duke Nukem 3D, and deals with many other publishers including Spectrum Holobyte (Civilization) andSSI (Panzer General). If you've heard of any of the online gaming services, chances are it's TEN — its marketing budget seems almost unlimited.

With three massive T3 connections to the Internet, latency problems won't be due to TEN's servers. Instead of joining with a low latency ISP or dial-up service (TEN will provide dial-ups in larger cities), TEN is dealing with the bandwidth issue by checking the latency each user is getting, and only allowing users to play certain games when the latency is low enough to support them. In practice, this means that although TEN is nationwide, you'll probably be playing mostly with people in your area. We definitely like TEN's way of letting you know what your latency is — a little mascot named 'Mr. Bandwidth.' Cool.



XBAND PC

<http://www.xband.com/>

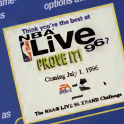
XBAND PC is a name that may be familiar to you. The original XBAND is a 16-bit gaming service which enables two players to play Genesis and Super NES games over a modem. Unlike the original XBAND, which basically brokered local phone calls for game-playing, as well as providing news, e-mail and info, XBAND PC is a full gaming service that enables multiplayer gaming in the same fashion as the other

services listed here. What XBAND's 16-bit experience has taught them, in addition to how to do full multiplayer gaming for 32-bit consoles (see sidebar), is a number of tricks to beat the latency issues.

XBAND's hook to gamers, beyond the number of games supported, will be the amount of other special features on the service: not just stats, chat rooms and the like (although that will all be there), but many 'channels' of different content, from magazine articles, to

Note: Imagine Publishing, parent company of Ultra Game Players and Catapult, creators of XBAND, have signed a letter of intent to have content from Ultra Game Players on the XBAND service.

UPDATE: Just as this issue was going to press, MPath and Catapult (the company behind XBAND) announced a merger. Exped XBAND PC to go away, although XBAND will still exist for console gamers. MPath gets XBAND PC's excellent user interface, and Catapult gets access to MPath's high speed Internet links. It just goes to show how incredibly fast the world of Internet gaming zips along.



DWANGO

<http://www.dwango.com/>

<http://www.dwango.com/>

DWANGO, Dial-up Wide Area Network Gaming Operation, is the only multiplayer online gaming service up right now. Instead of going over the Internet, though, to play a game using DWANGO you must call one of 23 local dial-up servers (which may be a toll call). From there, you can play across the country.

Because it doesn't use the Internet to transfer actual game data, and because games are always held between geographically close locations, DWANGO is extremely fast. Since it's currently the only game in town, it is also home to some of the best players in the coun-



try, especially in supported games like Doom, Terminal Velocity, Hexen, and Heretic. Without a ton of important-sounding strategic alliances and exclusive deals, DWANGO probably looks the worst, on paper, of any of the services, which is ironic, considering it is the only one which we know actually works. But that should count for a lot as MPATH, Engage and the others go through their inevitable growing pains.

OTHER OPTIONS

These services will not be the only places you can play multiplayer games over the Internet. There are sites that are dedicated to just one game, like Interactive Creation's Warbirds, a massive multi-user flight sim and combat program (it's at <http://www.icgames.com>). Most of the traditional online services, like CompuServe, are also planning to offer graphical multiplayer gaming (most have multiplayer text

games available now). Also, many companies, like Blizzard (makers of Warcraft II and Diablo), will have free sites for multiplayer gaming (without, of course, the bells and whistles like stats and low latency solutions). And if you're a real do-it-yourselfer, check out Kali, at <http://ftp.internexos.net/pub/kali>. Kali lets you use the Internet to mimic a local area network. It can be slow, but for games where speed is not essential, it works well.

MPATH

<http://www.mpath.com/>

MPATH's strategy for beating the latency problem for its MPlayer gaming service is to partner exclusively



with an Internet Service Provider, PSINet, that has its own high speed nationwide network backbone. As long as you use PSINet to access MPlayer, you should have few, if any, latency problems. Since PSINet will make sure that packets of gaming data receive priority over, say, e-mail, if you're not using PSINet, you can still access the service, but you just won't be getting the same speed.

Is it worth the hassle of switching providers just to play games at a fast rate? That's a question that will have to be answered by individual gamers. MPlayer exclusive games should come with all the necessary software to join PSINet as well as MPath.

MPATH is also being designed from the ground up to support speech in chat rooms and in games. Assuming you have the right speech enabled modem and a PC that can handle speech input, you'll actually be able to talk to teammates and opponents instead of just typing them messages, which should be cool. One of the main players behind MPath is SegaSoft, the latest spin-off of Sega of America. Networked Three Dirty Dwarves? Time will tell.

<http://www.mpath.com/>

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

To take full advantage of the current crop of online games, you'll need to invest in some pretty powerful hardware. *ULTRA Game Players* recommends the following:

- [1] The best Pentium-based PC you can afford; at least a 90, preferably a P133 or P166 (the computer should come with a sound card, a 1 gigabyte hard drive and a 4X CD-ROM drive; don't settle for anything less).
- [2] At least 16MB RAM, preferably 24 or 32MB.

- [3] A 28.8Kbaud modem, or "ideally an ISDN connection."
- [4] A connection with a high-quality Internet Service Provider.
- [5] Windows 95
- [6] A good joystick (we like the FlightStick Pro from CH Products and ThrustMaster's XX, as well as Microsoft's SideWinder 3D stick).
- [7] Optional (you can always add it later) is a 3D accelerator. We think the time to buy a 3D accelerator is after Christmas,

'96, when the market will have settled down a little bit. Despite the power of the above system, thanks to decreasing costs, you should be able to have it all for less than \$2500; and of course, you won't have to use it just for games — you can justify the cost by thinking of all that productivity and educational software you'll use. Yeah, right. Anyway, Falcon Systems sells preconfigured gaming PCs, check them out.

CONSOLE OPTIONS

If you don't have a PC, don't despair. Online multiplayer gaming is coming to the consoles as well. Soon after Sega releases its 28.8 modem NetLink add-on for Saturn, Catapult, the same people who brought online gaming to 16-bit machines with XBAND, will launch XBAND Saturn in the US (it's already going in Japan). XBAND Saturn will follow the XBAND PC model, rather than the 16-bit XBAND model, allowing more than two people to play at the same time. *Command and Conquer* will be

one of the first Saturn games you'll be able to play over the net. Other Sega titles said to be in the works are *Baku Baku* and *Daytona USA*. Although the people at Catapult say it is technically possible for Saturn users to play PC users, it's unclear at this point if any of the first games released for Saturn will support cross-platform play.

Catapult is also in negotiations with Sony to start an XBAND PlayStation network, but according to *ULTRA Game Player's* industry sources, Sony has far less developed Internet

plans than Sega, so don't expect XBAND PlayStation before mid-1997.

On the Nintendo side, things are less clear. For the rest of '96, Nintendo will probably just be worrying about selling Nintendo 64, not add-ons. But Nintendo has its own 16-bit network going in Japan, and the company is known to be in close discussion with Netscape Communications about its Internet plans for Nintendo 64. Probably by late next year, there will be an Internet add-on for the Nintendo 64.

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<http://www.gameplayers.com>



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ULTRA

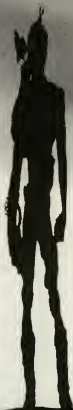
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REVIEWS

Welcome to the most comprehensive reviews section anywhere.

Here at *Game Players*, we've always prided ourselves on having the most detailed, comprehensive reviews section anywhere. And now that we're **ULTRA Game Players**, we've taken it even further, with an even more in-depth scoring system,

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092 Beyond The Beyond

101 Crash Bandicoot

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Inside The Score Box

We pride ourselves on having the best, most comprehensive scoring system in the biz. Here's how the formula works:

GRAPHICS How a game looks is only a small part of the formula, but an important one. Great graphics can pull the player into a world and make the experience seem all the more real. *Weighted by 4.*

• **MUSIC** Again, music won't make or break a game, but if the soundtrack moves you in an RPG, or gets your heart pumping in a fighting game, it adds to the overall appeal. *Weighted by 2.*

• **SOUND EFFECTS** Good sound effects can actually help you to "feel" the game better. Just imagine how much less of an impact a heavy punch would make if it only made a small "tick" on contact. *Weighted by 2.*

• **INTERACTION** How well does the game respond to your commands? How much influence do you have over what's going on? *Weighted by 4.*

• **BALANCE** Is the game childishly easy one level, then frustratingly hard the next? Does your opponent have an unfair advantage? When you want to save, do you have to wait an hour back to the village? *Weighted by 4.*

• **DEPTH** Ever bought a game, fallen in love with it

the first hour, only to find it in two hours? A great game will take a long time to finish, and offer plenty of reasons to come back for more. *Weighted by 4.*

• **EXTRAS** Did the game's programmers go for that "little extra", testing in codes, hidden items, secret screens, or other added bonuses? *Weighted by 1.*

• **PRESENTATION** Does the game create a world that draws you in? Do the intro screens and menus reinforce this environment? *Weighted by 1.*

• **INNOVATION** A game can be loads of fun without offering anything totally new, but the classics are always the trendsetters. *Weighted by 1.*

• **RATING** The total sum of all the categories, divided by 23.



The ULTRA AWARD

When a game makes it through our grueling review system and still comes out with at least a 9.0, it earns our **ULTRA Award**. This is our guarantee that you'll love these games, so don't miss 'em!

ALTERNATIVES

Shunt-Shunt: Man 7 **9.0**

Super Kombat Fighter II **9.5**

Jumping Flash II: Rayoack **9.0**

If you like a game, chances are that you'll enjoy other similar games. That's why we now offer Alternatives. If you've read our review and you still aren't quite sure if the game is your type, just check out the alternatives to see if it's similar to any of your other faves.

REVIEW

NINTENDO 64



ニンテンドウ64



SUPER MARIO 64

Is Mario alone worth the price of a new system? You betcha!



Being the world's biggest Mario fan, I used to joke with the rest of the **ULTRA GP** staff that I planned to give the next Mario game a perfect score, sight unseen. It was a fun way to get the Saturn and PlayStation fanatics around here jumping mad, but I never — I repeat, NEVER thought I'd actually end up doing it. Then I plugged in *Super Mario 64*, and played. And played. And played. No kidding, the day we got this game in, I didn't go home that night. I played nearly 48 hours of straight Mario, then continued to marathon

Fans of the Mario series know the formula well: you enter colorful cartoon worlds, using quick reflexes for stomping enemies and leaping over pits, as well as solving dexterity-based puzzles. Each successive title has added more to the gameplay with greater depth, new Mario maneuvers, and other entirely brand-new ideas. Remember, this is the series that invented the modern action/platform game, and its creators have never been content to simply add better graphics to the same old game. It should come as no surprise then that *Super Mario 64* is not only the best-looking title of the series, but the best playing as well.

The game is set up like this: at its center is the Princess' castle. Once Mario starts the game and enters the castle, he is presented with several doors in the main hall. Most doors lead to a room with a large picture hung on a wall, which Mario can jump into to enter a course. There are 15 courses in all, not counting the game's many hidden bonus areas.

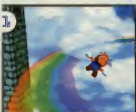
Once you've entered a course, your job is to find and collect stars. There are seven stars in each course, including one that you get for collecting eight red coins, one for collecting 100 gold coins, and five others that are uniquely hidden. These stars usually require you to solve tricky puzzles, or perform a series of difficult stunts. The bonus areas contain stars too, but there are no hints on where to find them, or on how many to look for (bonus areas usually only have one or two stars). It takes 70 stars to fight the last Bowser (you fight the nasty Koopa King three times in all), but most play-

through the rest of the week into the weekend. When I did try to sleep, I couldn't. All I could see was Goombas and Koopas burned into the insides of my eyelids. But hey, what could I do? This game is just that good, and any serious gamer won't be able to put it down for five minutes.

1 When wearing the winged-hat, Mario flies every bit as good as **Plotwings!**



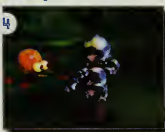
2 The only thing more impressive than how Bowser looks is the crazy way that you fight him.



3 The slide races are a real joy. Here, Mario goes up against a Penguin for a Star.



1 Some of the meaner bad guys just want to steal Mario's hat! 2 Wake up, Mario — I think I see Yoshi! 3 One of Mario's many new abilities has him swinging from monkeybars. 4 The amazing graphic power of the N64 is hinted at with 'metal Mario'. Just look at the way the light shimmers off of his reflective surface... amazing!



SIGHTSEEING



1 The main hall, the central point of all the courses. From here Mario can go anywhere.

2 Your camera-man joins you just before you enter the castle. He's actually the one you're moving when you switch views.

Having total freedom of movement in a completely 3D environment is at the heart of *Mario 64*, but it does take a little getting used to. Not only do you have to learn how to manipulate the camera view on-screen, but you also have

Camera Left



Close View



to familiarize yourself with the new N64 control pad. You need to be able to instinctively swing the camera around to get the best view of the action, without having to look down at the buttons, to navigate through the tougher courses.

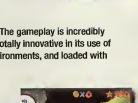
Camera Right



Medium View



Long View



ers won't stop until they've found all 120 stars. Uncover them all, and...

The beauty of *Mario 64* is in its unique details. This is no common action title, with repetitive gameplay and cookie-cutter levels. This game thrives on throwing the player a new twist every time he enters a different area. Mario's skills remain the same throughout the game, but each area makes the player use those abilities

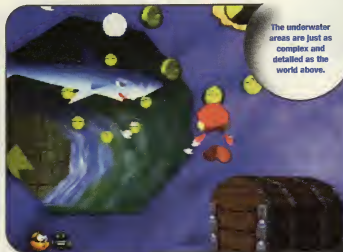
in new and different ways. All the while the game manages to maintain a smooth, cohesive feel thanks to the consistent ways Mario interacts with his environment.

Super Mario 64 really is top-notch in every category. The graphics are amazing — the game looks like a cartoon brought to life. The music takes those classic Mario tunes we're all nostalgic for and adds a nice N64

luster. The gameplay is incredibly deep, totally innovative in its use of 3D environments, and loaded with

extra incentives to play well beyond the official 'end' of the game. Maybe in a year from now when we get a look at Nintendo's second-generation N64 software, *Super Mario 64* will be brought back down to Earth in comparison. But for now, this is the best videogame this reviewer has ever played in his life.

CHRIS DATE



The underwater areas are just as complex and detailed as the world above.



1 One neat trick is to knock a Koopa turtle out of his shell and then go surfing on it, which in itself is worth the price of admission. 2 Don't watch where you're swimming and you'll end up fish bait! 3 The popular Ghost House is back from *Super Mario World*, and its residents are bigger and nastier than ever.



ALTERNATIVES

Jumping Flash! 9.2
Crash Bandicoot 8.4
Nights 9.3
Clockwork Knight 8.7
BUG 7.9

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS 3.0
 MUSIC 3.0
 SOUND EFFECTS 3.0

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION 3.0
 BALANCE 3.0
 DEPTH 3.0

SPECIAL

EXTRAS 3.0
 PRESENTATION 3.0
 INNOVATION 3.0

RATING

10

REVIEW

PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション



DIE HARD TRILOGY

Three times the action! Three times the explosions! A zillion times the blood!

From the start, the *Die Hard* Trilogy project had several strikes against it. It's the first game from Fox Interactive, it's a movie license, and it's attempting to combine three games into one. Normally, these are all bad indica-

tions, but *Die Hard Trilogy* overcomes these obstacles with blazing speed, smooth graphics, and pure, unadulterated (OK, slightly adulterated) fun. Each of the three games comes from a distinct genre, but the glue that holds them together is the mass

amount of gore in each game. The only category that describes each game is 'mutilation'. Whether it's with a light gun, a grenade, or the fender of a cab, there's always gallons of blood splattered on the screen.

The deepest game of the bunch is *Die Hard 1*, which uses a 3/4, third-person perspective and has the player roaming the floors of the Nakatomi Plaza, blowing away terrorists and saving hostages. It plays a lot like *True Lies* or *Loaded* and is equipped with plenty of awesome effects and devastating weapons. The 20 levels have quite a bit of variation and easily the most replay value of the three games.

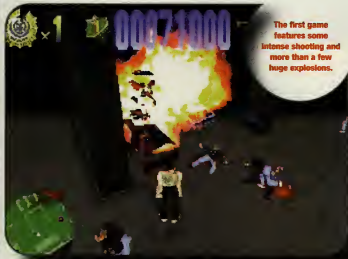
In *Die Hard 2: Die Harder*, it's light gun mayhem (compatible with Konami's Enforcer gun), as the player goes on a *Virtua Cop*-type track through the airport, destroying all in sight. The impressive elements of *Die Hard 2* are the awesome effects and

the ability to shoot everyone and everything with all kinds of different and gruesome guns. Its eight levels are all done well, but beyond finding new ways to kill the innocent, it lacks depth.

The final game, *Die Hard: With a Vengeance*, has over 15 levels of racing through the traffic and pedestrians (ouch!) of New York City. Again, the graphics, special effects, and control are impeccable, but the play in each level is pretty much the same, which could lead to boredom if it weren't for the ability to bounce innocents off your fender and wipe the blood off the windshield (that just never gets old).

The game is pure fun in each of the three sections, but after the initial 'wow', the fact remains that each of the three games lacks depth. What *Die Hard Trilogy* does is capture the thrill of an action movie like no other game has ever done — huge explosions, non-stop action, tons of gore, and no plot. It's pure action, take it or leave it.

MIKE MALMON



The first game features some intense shooting and more than a few huge explosions.



1 Nothing captures the spirit of *Die Hard Trilogy* like clearing pedestrian guts off your windshield in *Die Hard: With a Vengeance*.

2 Ever wanted to shoot a cop? Well, here's your chance to do it without the death penalty in *Die Hard 2*.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	9
MUSIC	7
SOUND EFFECTS	9

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	9
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	10

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	10
PRESENTATION	10
INNOVATION	7

RATING

8.5

1 Other than running over pedestrians, the best part of *Die Hard 3* is chasing the winner truck. 2 Shooting frantically is the best way to find secret routes. 3 The disappearing buildings are a good way for the player to keep track of where he's going. 4 Driving through a huge explosion is awesome, but it's hard to believe you'd survive it.



ニンテントウ64



REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

PILOT WINGS 64

The N64 passes its first flight test with flying colors



As one of the few Nintendo 64 launch titles, the realism of *PilotWings 64* makes it the practical companion to the cartoony antics in *Super Mario 64*. Both titles also showcase the N64's advanced capabilities very well, and do a good job of teaching you to use the analog joystick. But is the game any fun? Oh, yeah.

This game reaches out and grabs you right from the opening fly-by intro sequence and never lets go. Whether you're looking to set new course records, trying out daredevil flight maneuvers, or simply roaming around the countryside checking out the landscape, you're gonna have big-time fun!

There are three main events (not counting four bonus stages): hang-glider, rocket-pack, and gyrocopter. The fun takes place at various locations over the game's four mas-

sive islands, where you'll be graded primarily on how well you maneuver, how fast you can achieve all of your objectives, and how accurately you land. In some hang-glider levels, you're even graded on how well you take photographs — a surprisingly fun touch.

The game's many challenges increase with difficulty as your expertise develops, without becoming frustrating. Indeed, many of the levels are so habit-forming, you may find yourself forgetting all about your mission and just sailing along in the clouds.

Of course, a review of this game wouldn't be complete until I raved about the graphics. Everything looks so amazing, from the deep-blue ocean to the fantastic waterfalls, that you'll swear that you just

have to touch the screen to get wet! There's also my personal favorite — a night-time space shuttle launch that's so real, you'll feel the heat from its enormous rocket boosters!

Even after you've finished this

game, you'll have a blast creating your own stunts, and challenging a friend to top them. This game is a must for any fan of flight.

BY TILL DONOHUE



The landscape in *PilotWings 64* is vast, with incredibly detailed terrain that seems to go on forever.



1 Skydiving is now a bonus level, and is split into two parts: lining up in group formations and landing on target.

2 Spectacular scenes like this nighttime space shuttle take-off are what make this game so memorable.

ALTERNATIVES

Air Combat 64

Boeing Dead 64

Nights 64

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	3.0
MUSIC	3.0
SOUND EFFECTS	8

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	3.0
BALANCE	8
DEPTH	3.0

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	5
PRESENTATION	7
INNOVATION	5

RATING

9.0

1 Not only can you explore above the Islands, but you can explore in them too. 2 Right about now, you wish you had a parachute! Human cannonballs have the WORST landings! 3 There's no real goal in the Birdman levels — just fly around and see the sights! 4 When you're feeling more aggressive, hop in your gyro-copter and light up the countryside!



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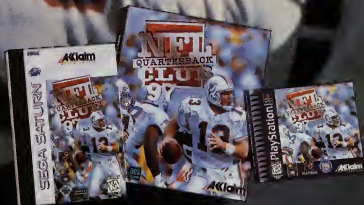
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-Game Players, June 1996



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REVIEW PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション



BEYOND THE BEYOND

Does the first true Playstation RPG cast a spell or is it cursed?

Despite the advance of videogame development across the next generation gamescape, RPGs remain the one genre that hasn't shown significant upgrades in appearance or gameplay. If anything, the term "next generation RPG" can be considered an oxymoron rather than a good description of RPGs available for 32-bit systems.

Equipped with a traditional point-based battle scheme, *Beyond the Beyond's* revolving, 360-degree 3D battle scenes are probably the

most attractive sequences ever created for an RPG. The spell attacks are breathtaking, despite the fact that the "3D" moniker can only loosely be applied because of the sprite-based nature of the graphics. But even with these superior fighting sequences, most of the game is played utilizing a top-down, isometric view.

Ultimately, the actual game-play experience varies little from the look and feel of conventional 16-bit RPGs.

In terms of gameplay, there are certain rudiments that prove to be annoying. The focus of the game is decidedly on frequent skirmishes that get in the way of the explorative, story-based, problem-solving elements that should be at the core of an RPG. As important as battles are to RPGs, making a player stop and fight every other step while merely trying to get out of town is just bad game design. In addition, there is the matter of overly vague story-line cues that simply leave the player clueless.

In spite of its imperfections, there is a solid RPG base to



3D battle scenes are *Beyond the Beyond's* primary contribution to the advancement of RPG gameplay.

Beyond the Beyond. The story of a young boy forced to face the threat of impending evil while searching for his father is a satisfying tale. The expansive world features a wide variety of locales to explore and, once all the members of the hero's party are accumulated and powered up, the frequent battles can be knocked through a lot faster. The game also features considerable value by offering hours upon hours of gameplay.

Though no new herald of a revolution in the genre, *Beyond the Beyond* is an entertaining title that requires a little perseverance

and patience to get to the goodness at its core.

ROGER BURCHILL

ALTERNATIVES

King's Field 5.4
Legend of Oasis 5.4
Lucian's Quest 5.4
Lufia II 6.5
Shining the Sorcerer 7.3
Super Mario RPG 8.0



1 The appearance of Arawn's Tower foreshadows dark times for the inhabitants of the land.

2 The majority of the gameplay is still conducted on screens with a decidedly 16-bit flavor.



THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	7
MUSIC	7
SOUND EFFECTS	5

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	7
BALANCE	6
DEPTH	9

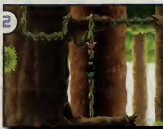
SPECIAL

EXTRAS	5
PRESENTATION	5
INNOVATION	7

RATING

6.8

1 Spells of ever-increasing strength are one of the most satisfying components of battle scenes. 2 Side-perspective screens do pop up occasionally for variety, but they are few and far between. 3 Cynical gamers might attribute this dragon's condition to the sometimes tedious gameplay. 4 Point-based gameplay will be appreciated by the RPG traditionalist.



	Andor	Lvl 18	Current	
Andor	30	41	20	70
Annie	30	41	20	20
Samson	30	41	20	20
Edogard	30	41	20	20
Tont	30	41	20	20
Stats	Strength	40	5	Grand
Andor	Defense	15	5	Grand
Annie	Speed	22	5	Grand
Samson	SP	14	5	Grand
Edogard	Luck	5	5	Grand
Tont				



コンピューターゲーム



REVIEW
PC CD-ROM

QUAKE

REQUIREMENTS

- IBM PC
- VGA Display
- Pentium
- 8MB RAM 16MB recommended

Could being the most highly-anticipated PC game of the year be its doom?

Three years ago, id Software released *Doom*, one of the most revolutionary, groundbreaking games ever made. This moody, immersive firefight-in-hell reinvented computer gaming and left a generation of fans wanting more.

But now that *Quake* — the heir apparent to *Doom* — is out, some people have been disappointed. For most of us, there can only be one *Doom* and, while *Quake* can't recapture that magic of being in hell with nothing but a chainsaw, it is a great game with its own merits.

This is the first PC game to feature a true 3D environment —

trapdoors, murderholes, walkways, cross walkways, real bridges — and with the right power-ups, players can jump, fly or swim in any direction imaginable. And, unlike the sprites of *Doom*, *Quake*'s monsters are fully-rendered polygons, with far more fluid and varied animation. In practice, they can get a little pixelly, but id is already working on *Quake II*, which will take advantage of upcoming technical innovations on the PC to make the game graphics even faster.

But what makes *Quake* is its

1 Grenades and rockets do the most damage.

2 These knights inflict lethal damage with their swords.



gameplay. It's a lot like *Doom* — fast and furious, although with far fewer monsters. But although there's less monsters, the ones that are there are far more creepy.

The game is dark and a bit murky — in order to see it most clearly, you should play in a dark, quiet room, with few distractions. The game has no music, and it doesn't need it. The ambient sound effects that Trent Reznor has put together will make your skin crawl. With twenty-eight single-player levels in four episodes, and twenty-eight more death-match levels, the result is hours of great gaming.

But even when you finish the full version of *Quake*, the game is not over — you must play against your friends. *Quake*'s multiplayer mode

lets you compete with up to fifteen other players on a single server, and you can play cooperatively, in teams, or in a deathmatch free-for-all.

The same thing that happened with *Doom* will happen with *Quake*. Dedicated hackers will write editors, resulting in a flood of new levels that will keep dedicated players sated. Now throw in free Internet play — *Quake* was built ground-up with the online multiplayer experience in mind — and you have a game that just might be around for a long time.

JASON RATES

ALTERNATIVES

- Strike 8.2
- Alien Trilogy 7.8
- Conquest 7.4
- Witchaven II 6.5
- Hexen 6.5



The powerful Shambler fires lightning from its booty.

RATING

8.6

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	7
MUSIC	N/A
SOUND EFFECTS	10

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	7
BALANCE	8
DEPTH	8

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	8
PRESENTATION	7
INNOVATION	7

1 The world of *Quake* is more realistic than comparable games. 2 Zombies can only be slain with rockets or grenades. 3 Death Knights and the Lightning Gun don't appear in the shareware version of *Quake*. 4 This floating creature is called a Scrag.



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セカ サターン

REVIEW
SATURN

When it comes to creating workable fiction, it's been said that there are only three major themes from which to choose and, until recently, it was easy to believe the same for videogames. That was, until *Nights* made its entrance. Arguably the most innovative gaming experience of the year, *Nights*, from *Sonic the Hedgehog* creator Yuji Naka, asks the player to take a true step up to the next level of gaming. There are enough familiar elements to make it instantly likable, but if you're interested in playing this game, be prepared to learn a new formula.

Because the courses are timed, *Nights* almost feels more like a racing



In a year when anything can happen, 'anything' just did

game than a standard action title, though the pure speed is only a small part of the fun. With so many great new elements added to the traditional action formula, *Nights* is the kind of title that raises the bar for games in general.

While *Nights* succeeds on so many different levels, you can't help but notice the amazing graphics first. The Saturn has taken more than its fair share of technology bashing for not being able to easily do some of the special effects

1 The graphic style of *Nights* is fresh and colorful.

2 The boss stages are beautiful, fun and inspired.



readily available on the PlayStation, but *Nights* proves disbelievers wrong on more than one occasion.

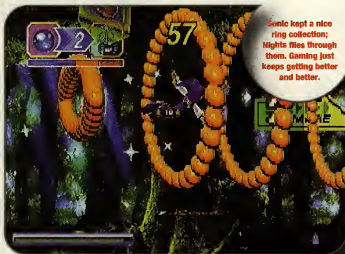
Spectacular effects, like transparent fog, multiple light-sourcing and gourd shading all work to perfection in *Nights*. Beyond the technical achievements, the artwork in *Nights* is nothing short of outstanding. Sega provides a bright, beautiful dream land that conjurs up images of the most imaginative fairy tale.

But what's far more important than its looks is its gameplay. And, as in all landmark titles, this is where the game really shines. From the absolutely natural analog control, to the constant flow of original challenges, *Nights* fulfills its promise of being thoroughly enjoyable on just about every level. Whether

collecting gems or successfully completing a string of acrobatics, the action is a steady source of encouragement to continue playing.

Unfortunately, the player's need to constantly see more leads directly into the only real shortcoming of the game, which is that there simply aren't enough levels to quite satisfy. Perhaps any game as great as *Nights* will always leave you wanting more, and there are some clever incentives to keep you playing certain levels over and over again, but still another stage or two wouldn't have hurt.

•PATRICK BAGGATTA



Sonic kept a nice ring collection; *Nights* flies through them. Gaming just keeps getting better and better.

ALTERNATIVES

Super Mario 64 8.9
Crash Bandicoot 6.4

RATING

9.3

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS 10
MUSIC 8
SOUND EFFECTS 10

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION 10
BALANCE 9
DEPTH 8

SPECIAL

EXTRAS 9
PRESENTATION 10
INNOVATION 10

1 Varying camera angles show the true 3D nature of *Nights*' graphics, though the flight engine is actually set on invisible 2D tracks. 2 With a host of acrobatic moves at your disposal, it takes practice to truly master *Nights*' abilities. 3 You will need to master certain battle skills. 4 Exploring the 3D terrain is mostly an interruption to the flying action.



REVIEW

PC CD-ROM



コンピューターゲーム



WITCHAVEN II

REQUIREMENTS

- 486/66 MHz
- 2x CD-ROM drive
- 8MB RAM

While not a pub crawl, *Witchaven II* does have its share of brawls

Something of a cross between *Might & Magic* and *Doom*, *Witchaven II* is a combat dungeon crawl. This puts it in the same camp as *Heretic* and *Hexen*, but its poor controls, no-hum level design, and murky graphics leave it coming up a bit short.

You're a warrior in a dungeon, using a variety of hand-to-hand weaponry—such as swords, pikes and maces—against various monsters: goblins, orcs and berserkers. You'll also pick up magic scrolls and potions along the way,

giving you things like healing, flying powers, and super-strength. The combat is very visceral, with lots of blood and grunting. When your weapons crunch into your opponent's armor, there's a solid feel of steel hitting steel. The goblins and barbarians groan, bleed and die, tumbling over into crumpled heaps, all in a very satisfying manner.

Another nice feature with the game is the level editor. Patient players who take the time to learn how to use this complex program can make their own dungeons, and populate

them with monsters and trade their levels with other *Witchaven* fans.

But for people who enjoy *Doom*-style shooters, the emphasis on hand-to-hand combat in *Witchaven* may leave them a bit bored. With a first-person view, you can't maneuver as well as you could in a fighting game, and *Doom* games are primarily about shooting and dodging. As a result, *Witchaven*'s hand-to-hand stuff gets old after a while. But that's pretty much all you get, level after level, with only the added bother of using the right magic potions and scrolls.

Still, *Witchaven* does have a satisfying, role-playing combat feel to it, like a diluted *Hexen*. But the graphics are more pixelated, the gameplay is choppy and there are more bugs (for example, after every save, your view is changed back to the default full-screen mode, a definite drawback for those who save often and like to see their status bars).

The most surprising thing is that the game has the same basic engine as *Duke Nukem 3D*, since Capstone licensed its engine from 3D Realms. That only makes *Witchaven II* so much more disappointing.

In the end, *Witchaven II*



1 Magic spells and potions aid you in your battles against strange foes.

2 The Mino-drakes are half-mountain, half-serpent, and totally evil.

ALTERNATIVES

Hexen 3.5
Strike 2.0
Quake 1.0

is an improvement over the original, but it still doesn't stand up to the acknowledged masters of the field: *Doom*, *Duke Nukem 3D*, and *Quake*.

by JASON BATES



Most of *Witchaven* looks like this—hand-to-hand fighting in the dungeons.

THE LINE

• AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	5
MUSIC	5
SOUND EFFECTS	6

• GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	5
BALANCE	6
DEPTH	5

• SPECIAL

EXTRAS	7
PRESENTATION	6
INNOVATION	3

RATING

5.3

1 The hero's reward: glittering piles of gold, free for the taking. 2 Also included in the game is a Build engine, which lets you create your own levels and horrors. 3 The Dead Who Walk! Count on seeing this bony guy among your many foes. 4 The enemy can be tough in a fight, but they're not too smart. Use your brains to ensure victory!





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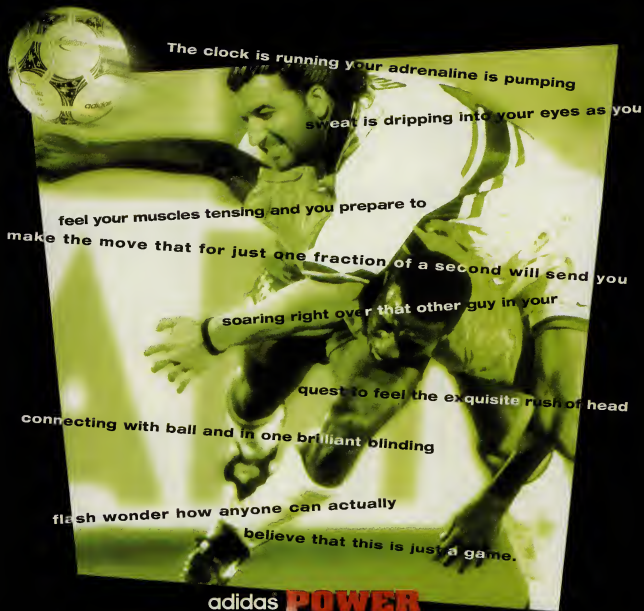
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プレイステーション



REVIEW
PLAYSTATION

CRASH BANDICOOT

Is it 'crash and burn', or does this bandicoot kick some mascot butt?

Mario vs. Sonic vs. Nights vs. Crash. In what may well be the showdown of the decade, Crash enters the platform game wars armed with a 'traditional, but innovative' take on the action/platform genre. The most compelling question, however, is whether the familiarity of *Crash's* gameplay will breed contempt or nostalgic affection.

The gameplay is classic stuff: run from level to level until you've reached the end of *Crash's* three islands, hopping over pits and spindashing into enemies all along the

way. The individual stages offer a nice variety of goals, as well as the views that you play from.



Taken on graphics alone, *Crash* stands in a class by itself when compared to its 32-bit competition. Every item visible on the screen is polygon-modeled in actual 3D and then exquisitely texture-mapped. *Crash* also features true light-sourcing and shadows that are

actually cast by objects in the game environment. Still, as attractive as the game may be, the most important issue is how well it plays. Compared directly to the 16-bit games that inspired it, *Crash Bandicoot* is the mother of all platformers. Differing play perspectives, traditional boss enemies, secret passages and bonus levels add copious amounts of variety to the gameplay. There is hardly a moment to take a breath while Crash runs, spins, jumps, and battles his way through three huge islands worth of demented, animated enemies. Sometimes the difficult gameplay

does verge on frustrating, but taken as a whole, *Crash* fulfills its mission of offering traditional platform gameplay in new 32-bit wrappings.

The sole element that prevents *Crash* from earning an ULTRA Award is the matter of originality. As fun as the game may be, there is a distinct impression that you've been there and done that. *Crash* has definitely mastered the old-school style, but these days a game needs a whole new vision to be considered great.

ROGER BURCHILL



1 The variety of perspectives utilized for different levels keeps the gameplay fresh.

2 Some levels are 2D side-scroller-based, but Crash can still move (and die) in any direction.

ALTERNATIVES

Clockwork Knight 2/2/1
Donkey Kong Country 2/1/4
Earthworm Jim 2/1/2
Jumping Flash 2/1/3
Nights 4/1/3
Super Mario 64 10/10

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	10
MUSIC	8
SOUND EFFECTS	8

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	9
BALANCE	9
DEPTH	9

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	8
PRESENTATION	8
INNOVATION	6

RATING

8.8

1 It wouldn't be a true platform game without mine carts snuck in somewhere. 2 The beautiful 'Road to Nowhere' stage will have you cursing the developers. Fear it. 3 The third and final island is the longest stage and features the most daunting challenges. 4 Spiked turtles, my ass! Try dealing with machine gun-toting varmints!



REVIEW

PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション



RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION



Ridge Racing is still fun, but is Namco running out of gas?

There's been an on-going dispute here at **ULTRA** **GAME PLAYERS** on whether *Ridge Racer* or *Daytona USA* is the better racing game. Incredibly, I seem

to be the only one to notice *Ridge Racer*'s more realistic racing model, and its superior challenges. I had hoped that *Ridge Racer Revolution* would quiet the silly dissension, and

although it doesn't quite do that, it is a step in the right direction.

Ridge Racer Revolution improves on the original with graphics that are now even cleaner and crisper.

Any previous draw-in problems have been eliminated for the most part.

Improving on a high point, the soundtrack that so ideally complements the races has been expanded with even more pumping tracks. But the most important improvement comes in the more forgiving control. Power slides, although still quite challenging, are no longer your enemy.

'Rubbing' other cars should now be considered a routine race tactic instead of a speed-sucking, expletive-inducing racing faux pas. In addition, the link cable two-player mode is a major plus that sends ridge racing to new heights and allows you to practice offensive driving skills on, err... with a friend (as long as you can afford the extra PlayStation, TV, and game, that is).

But as competent a sequel as *Ridge Racer Revolution* may be, regrettably, it does little to live up to the 'Revolution' part of its moniker. Although all around variety in the tracks

is improved over the original, track selection is still limited with just three basic tracks that share common portions. The ability to race them in reverse after conquering them forward has always been a feature of debatable entertainment — it's nice, but not great. And perhaps most importantly, the lack of a season or circuit mode diminishes replay value for the single player.

Overall, the game is hurt by its similarities to the original. The racing genre has boasted increasingly better games since the release of the first *Ridge Racer*. Competitive products coming in the next few months seem to indicate that quality and expectations will be raised even more. *Ridge Racer* may have impressed with its good looks and challenging gameplay once upon a time, but the new incarnation seems more like a retreat than a new product. Its still a fun game, but it could've been much more.

ROGER BURCHILL

ALTERNATIVES

1.1 Challenger 8.7
Hang On GP 8.1
Road Rash 7.9
Sega Rally Championship 9.2
Wipeout 9.6



1 The 'hood ornament' view now comes with a much welcome rear view mirror.

2 Of course, there is still the outside view for game players who go for a more 'arcade' feel.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS 9
MUSIC 7
SOUND EFFECTS 7

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION 9
BALANCE 8
DEPTH 8

SPECIAL

EXTRAS 9
PRESENTATION 7
INNOVATION 6

RATING

8.1

1 The White Angel car (and its cheating ways) is now the most potent ride available. 2 Few racing games can match *Ridge Racer Revolution* for its exhilarating blend of speed and handling. 3 Love it or hate it, the power slide is the crux of the *Ridge Racer* series' gameplay. 4 The tracks are more challenging, but they still aren't completely different and distinct.





コンピュータゲーム



REVIEW

PC CD-ROM

REQUIREMENTS

- Windows 95
- Double-speed CD-ROM drive
- Pentium 40 • 8MB RAM
- 35MB hard-drive space
- VLB or PCI SVGA video • Mouse

FIRE FIGHT

Epic proves its dedication to making fast, furious, fun gaming experiences

Epic MegaGames works hard at making games that are fun, easy to play, and nice to look at. *Fire Fight* is a great example of their company's commitment to creating a title that will suck you in for several hours of explosive excitement.

The setting for the game hardly qualifies as original, but the gameplay makes up for it. You play an 'Enforcer' for the Phantom Council and, as such, you fly around a variety of landscapes, collecting a vast array of weapons and special items, shooting down lots of enemy ships. The top-down perspective gives the player a nice view of the action, while voice communications from headquarters report a variety of information, such as whether or not you should expect a big enemy ship to come out of hiding anytime soon.

Because Epic firmly believes games should be easy to learn, the controls almost exactly mimic those for *Doom*. Anyone familiar with id's classic will instantly fire, strafe, and change weapons like a pro. Still though, some players might find *Fire*

Fight a little troublesome to maneuver. Even with lots of practice and the option to play with the mouse or joystick, it's difficult to precisely control your ship at the necessary high speeds.

Weapons range from the standard Vulcan Cannon to Concussion Grenades. Other weapons in the mix include a Deathbringer Cannon (those on the business end of this weapon don't stay in one piece long) and some lethal Homing Missiles. You can also find special items to enhance your ship, such as a cloak-
ing device.

The parallax scrolling and high resolution SVGA artwork blend nicely to deliver a satisfying futuristic feel. Sadly, anyone with anything less than a Pentium 60 running Windows 95 will encounter



- 1 The multitude of weapons at your disposal can cause a great deal of havoc among the enemy.
- 2 You'll have to deal with obstructions like these mountains.

serious difficulties running the game.

But the horsepower needed is the only serious drawback to this action-packed title, especially when

you consider the eight-player network mode available. You can choose to play an out-and-out death-match, or battle to build a base by collecting bricks faster than your opponent. Although each player must have his own CD in the computer, the package comes with two CDs so you can

immediately start multi-playing.

When it comes to action games, this one has it all. As long as you have the computer horsepower to run it, it's well worth the price.

MIKE WOLF

ALTERNATIVES

Sauk and Destroyer 6.9
Single Strike 7.4
Desert Strike 6.1
Zone 44 6.6

THE SCORE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	8
MUSIC	6
SOUND EFFECTS	9

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	7
BALANCE	8
DEPTH	7

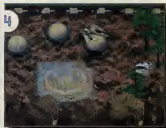
SPECIAL

EXTRAS	8
PRESENTATION	9
INNOVATION	8

RATING

7.6

1 Graphical locales range from high-tech cities to the most fright areas of the galaxy. 2 Enemy fortifications can be hazardous to your health. 3 Quick fingers and nimble use of weapons can mean life or death. 4 Missions vary from destroying enemy communications to rescuing hostages. You'll have to deal with enemy ships the whole time, though.





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REVIEW PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション



PROJECT HORNNED OWL

It's nice to look at, but PlayStation's first lightgun shooter misses its mark

The PlayStation's library has grown in just over a year to include games from almost every genre imaginable. The only

major exception to date has been the light-gun shooter. That slot has finally been filled with the release of Sony's own *Project Horned Owl*. With charac-

ter designs by Masamune Shirow (*Ghost in the Shell*), the look of the game is more than a little reminiscent of popular anime (Japanese

Animation) and has already met with a favorable response in Japan. Whether US gamers will appreciate the game's artistic style on the same level is yet to be determined, but the game does maintain a high design look throughout, which everyone should enjoy.

Always popular in the arcade, light-gun shooters such as *Project Horned Owl* can only be truly successful for the home when used with a light-gun controller. The game can be played without Konami's Enforcer gun (sold separately), but the experience just isn't the same.

The game follows most of the traditional rules throughout its five lengthy missions. There's a track-based camera in a 3D environment, with enemy targets popping up at every turn. One major difference in the game is the decision to buck the trend of using 3D enemies in exchange for sprite-based targets,

with an occasional polygonal boss character. Unfortunately, with the environments in the game being completely polygonal, the 2D enemies end up looking a little flat. Also, with sprite-based enemies, the action is reduced to a hit or miss proposition, as opposed to being able to hit an enemy repeatedly or in specific regions.

In the positive column, the designers have done an especially nice job of creating a truly interactive background. All glass can be shattered, barrels exploded, and walls shell-pocked. By involving the backgrounds in this way, there is an added sense of immersion into the game. There is, however, a decided lack of any hidden items to be found.

Shooting barrels, windows or walls may give you the thrill of destroying city property, but not much else. Though the game looks and plays pretty good, there's nothing that makes it stand out as exceptional. Still, the PlayStation finally has a light-gun game to call its very own.

by **PATRICK BAGGATTA**



Looking up to see the darkened city skies littered with futuristic enemies can be an unnerving feeling.



1 If you're a fan of anime, you'll probably recognize the style of artist Masamune Shirow.

2 The almost fully-interactive backgrounds are very convincing.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	6
MUSIC	6
SOUND EFFECTS	6

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	7
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	6

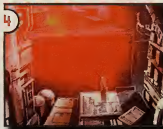
SPECIAL

EXTRAS	7
PRESENTATION	6
INNOVATION	4

RATING

6.4

1 The polygonal boss characters demonstrate the added depth created with true 3D enemies. **2** With five extensive missions, the game leads you through several varied locations. **3** The ability to power-up your weapon is a useful feature in later levels. **4** With some really nice anime cut-scenes, the story-line in *Project Horned Owl* is pretty well developed.



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One young woman, herself part alien, is Earth's last hope. Aided by her scientist father, her body is altered, transforming her into a harbinger of destruction.

Daddy's little girl doesn't cook, but she'll fry, bake or roast any enemy she sees. "Cause in this world, you don't take prisoners... you eat them for lunch.

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REVIEW SATURN



セガ サターン



DECATHLETE

Sega's latest entry raises the bar for track and field games

Olympic fever continues to grip the gaming community as Sega's hot new R&D department, AM3 (makers of *Sega Rally*, *Last Bronx*, and *Virtual-On*), has taken its best shot at creating the ultimate track & field game.

Decathlete scores big in the visual department by pumping up the polygon count on the characters. Each one of the seven athletes has their own look, celebrations, and distinct strengths and weaknesses. When

compared to the previous benchmark, Konami's *International Track & Field*, *Decathlete*'s competitors appear to be on polygon steroids — completely smooth, crisp, and full of life.

After the initial wow of the graphics, the key to a good track & field game always lies in the complexity and variety of the events. This is where *Decathlete* again manages to keep pace. The Decathlon consists of ten different events which rely on timing, speed, and skill. Events like the 100m Dash rely solely on button-mashing prowess, while events like the 400m and 1500m rely on strategy, coupled with a good finish. In the 1500m, the player has to weave through traffic while not losing strength. The key is to establish a good pace and then finish with a flurry. Other events like the Discus, Shot Put, Long Jump, High Jump, and Javelin all require power and a great deal of timing. All of the events in *Decathlete* seem to rely much more on timing than power, with most of the power meters reaching maximum without as frantic an effort as is usually required. This means that the best Decathletes aren't necessarily those with the fastest hands, but the surest.

With four difficulty levels, an arcade mode, a practice mode, an

event instruction feature, and a brilliant hall of fame, *Decathlete* has nearly everything covered. The one crucial flaw in *Decathlete* is the inability for multi-player play. There is a maximum of two competitors per Decathlon and each event is just screaming for some four-player competition. *International Track & Field* allowed for up to four players, which made it such an exciting game. The Hall Of Fame in *Decathlete* is what saves the replay value of the game. Each event has a list of five all-time best scores. Each time you break a record, your name goes to the top of

the list and is saved in the Saturn's internal RAM.

Decathlete has definitely raised the bar on track & field-type games. Since it doesn't rely heavily on button-mashing, it should appeal to an even wider audience. This one gets the gold.

MIKE SALMON



1 Balancing speed and impeccable timing, the Pole Vault is one of the more challenging events.

2 The Jamaican dance is definitely one of the favorite celebrations.



Some of the best-looking polygons to ever appear on a Saturn give each character their own unique look.

THE LINE

● AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	10
MUSIC	8
SOUND EFFECTS	7

● GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	8
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	8

● SPECIAL

EXTRAS	8
PRESENTATION	8
INNOVATION	7

RATING

8.4

1 The 100m dash needs four players racing head-to-head, but alas, the game has a flaw. 2 Rick Blade, the US entry, is perfect for events like the shotput. 3 Eilon Reggland, the lovely polygon goddess from France, is a perfect example of crisp graphics. 4 With a bit of practice, getting into the Hall Of Fame isn't difficult, but staying there isn't easy.



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afraid of a challenge,
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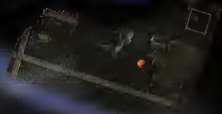
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N REAL FOOTBALL HITTING!

It's the hardest hitting football game to date. All of the physics of football—precisely, tackles and collisions—have been painstakingly researched.

MVP College Football '97 has special features. Direction of movement, the colliding players will dictate



Collision Zones to determine the outcome of hits. Momentum, and the skills and attributes the outcome of every tackle.

111 TEAMS, 111 PLAYBOOKS!

Comprehensive playbooks were designed with the help of **Tom Walsh**, former offensive coordinator of the Oakland Raiders and current CBS Radio college-football broadcaster. Each team runs the actual offense and defense of their real-life counterpart. You'll use detailed individual playbooks—after all, why have 111 teams if everyone uses the same playbook?



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There have never been player animations as realistic as in MVP College Football '97! Hundreds of hours of motion-captured data has been used in creating the most life-like characters to ever run across a video game field. Details of architecture, sky, and crowds create the feeling of sitting in the bleachers.



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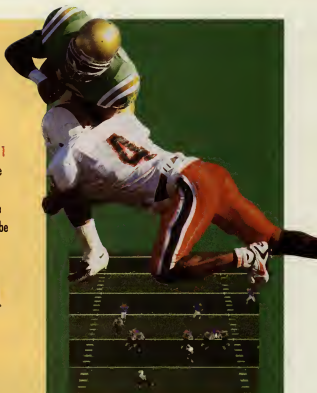
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The best sports videogame coverage anywhere, from gamers who can actually play real sports

SPORTS LINE



Many things in this magazine have undergone drastic changes, but this is still the only place to find the most up-to-date, accurate, and opinionated sports game information. Along with a new title, SportsLine is

also adding PC coverage, which means that if you like electronic sports games, this is the only place you need to be, no matter what system you play them on.

Each issue, we'll kick things off with an indepth look at what we feel is the biggest game at the time, like this month's Madden '97. I'll visit the developers and sit next to them as

they strive to create the best sports games possible, and I'll let you guys in on every little secret.

Following that will be the usual hard-hitting reviews and the hottest previews. I'm hoping you'll find SportsLine a major improvement over what was already the best sports section around.

— Mike Salmon



After a one year hiatus, EA Sports is ready to resume its role as sports leader

EA'S BACK!

There's no denying that EA Sports completely dominated the 16-bit sports genre, but last year's inability to successfully jump to the 32-bit level has left the sports king lost, but not forgotten. With two of its biggest franchises, the *NHL* series and *Madden*, both being cancelled and its others, *FIFA* and *NBA Live*, losing ground to competitors, EA Sports faces the stark reality of being just another sports game maker. When I asked Erik Whitford, EA Product Manager, what happened last year and how EA plans to remedy it, he responded with fervor, "Last year, we weren't prepared and didn't have enough time to do the kind of work that is expected from us, but this year we've had time and we're focused on making sure that the 32-bit market will be ours once again".

Perhaps the biggest indication of EA's decline was the cancellation of *Madden*, the most successful sports game ever. The reason EA held back *Madden* was simple, according to Associate Producer Ted Fitzgerald, "The game wasn't up to EA standards and we didn't want to stick our loyal consumers with a \$60 game that simply wasn't worth it." And as Erik Whitford puts it, "Right now, the consumers are disappointed and angry, but in the long run, they are going to thank us."

After last year's *Madden* was canned, EA

1. Last year's *Madden* looked good enough from the screenshots, but its miserable play caused EA to cancel the game and start from scratch.
2. This year's *Madden* is getting old school by returning to what made the first couple games so outstanding.
3. With *Madden* out of the way, Sony's impressive *Gameday* became the best-selling PlayStation title.
4. *NHL* suffered the same deadly fate as *Madden* last year, but work on '97 has revealed EA's first polygonal effort as a solid-looking game.

Immediately took the project away from the San Mateo development team and turned it over to Tiburon, one of its sharpest new development teams down in Florida, whose resume includes *Madden '94*, '96 and *NHL '95*, '96 for the Super NES. Tiburon completely ignored last year's failed effort and aimed to, "get old school with *Madden '97*", as the folks at EA like to say. The plan is to return the lost gameplay of recent years, while upgrading the graphics to give consumers a true 32-bit *Madden* and give Sony's *NFL Gameday* a run for its money. From all that we've seen *Madden '97* is on course to make a serious run at regaining its lost glory.

EA obviously lost its stronghold on the sports market last year, giving Sony and its highly successful *Gameday* and *Face Off* a giant head start. However, with the refurbished *Madden '97*, impressive early screens on *NHL '97*, and continued work on *NBA Live*, *Triple Play*, and *FIFA*, EA is poised to resume its perch at the top.



As for the question of whether the EA Sports brand still carries the same weight it used to, Whitford simply says, "we're just concerned about making the best quality games on the market, and whoever does that is sure to emerge as the winner."

PREVIEW PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション



The graphics in *Madden '97* are right on par with *Gameday* and the motions are extremely smooth.



Out of the ashes of last year's failed *Madden* comes what could be the best *Madden* ever. The focus this year is on gameplay, something that the makers of last year's game seem to have forgotten. The key word around the EA offices about this year's *Madden* is that '*Madden's* getting old school' and, to fans of the series, that means fast, furious, and fun gameplay.

Upon playing *Madden '97*, I can honestly say that the magic is back. The game is much faster than its rival, *Gameday*, and the total control of the players is incredible. Every NFL team is included with their current logos and uniforms (even the Ravens' ugly duds), as well as every Super Bowl winner and loser (lots of Vikings and Bills teams in that lot) and the usual All-Madden teams. Every real player is represented by his real-life stats and is placed on the current roster, ready to do battle. Every option and stat imaginable are available as well, with complete stat-tracking for every player, a create-a-player mode, trades, and even a salary cap, which means you can create super players for your favorite team, but the amount

of salary they require causes you to get rid of some other salaries in order to stay under the cap. So not only are you the coach and the player, but you're also the GM—a true fantasy leaguer's dream. The game is eight-player compatible, perfect for that Super Bowl party half-time challenge, and features two distinct and much tougher difficulty levels. The game still takes a bit of time to load up, but once you're on the field, the game has no delays, reminiscent of the good qualities of a cart game.

The Saturn and PlayStation versions are both scheduled to release at the same time. The two versions looked nearly identical and they both share the same exact options, but so far, the PlayStation version seems to control a bit tighter. The passing game is done excellently, with the ability to lob or throw a bullet like the old *Madden*. Receiving the ball seems to require more skill than ever. Players of *Madden* know that the best part of the game is playing the D, and this year's version puts you in more control than ever. A hard diving tackle, timed perfectly, can jar the ball loose or a perfectly timed jump can result in a batted pass or even a pick, depending on the player's

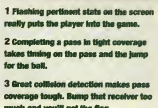
MADDEN '97

hands. It takes great skill to get your timing and angles down on defense and that's what makes having a great defensive stand in *Madden '97* so rewarding. The gameplay is back to classic *Madden*, but it's gotten even better.

The presentation and stats of *Madden '97* are in-depth and executed to near perfection. EA's Ted Fitzgerald stated, '*Gameday* was the best football game, but the depth of stats and presentation are definitely something we can and will do better'. A completely adjustable penalty system gives the game that much more realism. The stats are tracked in an easy-to-use database that includes league leaders.

But possibly one of the best features is the random, yet timely, flashing of stats on the screen during play. As you break from the huddle, stats like how many receptions will flash on the screen just like a game on TV.

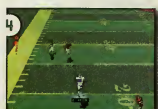
Gameplay and attention to detail give *Madden '97* a shot at regaining its familiar position on top of the football world. We'll see what Sony has to say about that.



1 Flashing player stats on the screen really puts the player into the game.

2 Completing a pass in tight coverage takes timing on the pass and the jump for the ball.

3 Great collision detection makes pass coverage tough. Bump that receiver too much and you'll get the flag.



1. Watching the holes open up in the running game is awesome... 2. ...now if you can cut back and get to that hole with the speedy Emmitt... 3. ...get a great downfield block from 'the convict'... 4. ...and you're off to the races, a race that Emmitt almost always wins.

PREVIEW SATURN



セガ サターン



WORLD SERIES BASEBALL II

Easily the best baseball game of last year, *World Series Baseball* for the Saturn is powering up for a mighty sequel. The graphics in *WSB II* are even sharper this time, with numbers on the player's jerseys and much-improved animation, coupled with the inclusion of every major league stadium. All baseball games nowadays include every stadium, but no game does them as well as *WSB II*. Day games, night games, indoors, or outdoors are all done to perfection. The stadium graphics surpass *Triple Play*, which previously had the best stadiums.

Beyond the initial wow of the graphics, *WSB II* has improved in many other ways as well. The announcer is even more intense, with commentary on the pitch selection, score, and clutch situations. In the version I've been play-

ing the announcer wasn't finished yet, but even the 25% complete announcer rivaled the best on other games. Once again, the play mechanics rely on classic and simple control that makes *WSB II* easy to pick up and hard to put down.

The fielders react perfectly to your every whim and the baserunning has never been done better. The batting has given more control to the player this year, where it isn't just timing and luck that decides the result. Pressing up or down on the control pad as you strike the ball determines the likelihood of a grounder or a fly ball. If you get caught going for home runs, then it will generally be a game full of pop flies. However, if you mix it up with some grounders through the infield by your less powerful sluggers, then save the home run swing for the big guns, you're much more likely to run up the score.

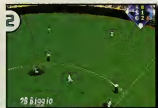
At first glance, *WSB II* looks the same as its predecessor, but upon further play, the game is definitely worthy of its roman numerals.



The pitching has changed quite a bit from last year's 'curve the ball three different ways in one pitch' style. It's still real easy to use arcade-style pitching, but the curves aren't as dramatic or unrealistic. You can actually choose from eight different types of pitches, from a forkball to a scroogle. The fact that there isn't a third dimension does take out much of intricacies of pitching, but *WSB II* isn't a game about pitching. It's more about hitting and fielding. And one new addition to the fielding is robbing the opposition of a home run.

When the ball isn't going way out of the yard, you can position a fielder right by the fence and leap in the air to take one away. There's no more satisfying defensive moment then robbing your buddy of a long ball.

All the improvements in *WSB II* have made a solid game engine even better and given baseball fans and Saturn owners reason to celebrate. It's still not going to be as deep a simulation as *Triple Play*, but the pure playability makes *WSB II* an odds-on favorite for the best baseball game of the year.



- 1 The stadium and player graphics have all improved and all of the views give you good vision of the beautiful playing field in Camden Yards...
- 2 ...and the hard carpet in the AstroDome...
- 3 ...even the vines of Wrigley are here. Now if Harry Carey stumbled around singing 'Take me out to the ballgame', you'd think you were in Chicago.
- 4 The smooth animation really makes *WSB II* tick, and it doesn't hurt the looks any, either.

IN MOTION



- 1 The curve ball is well-struck and heading for the gap... 2 ...Kenny Lofton gets on his horse to cut it off... 3 ...at the last second, Kenny sacrifices his body and lays out flat to make the catch... 4 ...then he holds the ball in the air. As you can see, *WSB II* is even smoother than last year and is chock full with plenty of awesome plays.

PREVIEW
PLAYSTATION

プレイステーション

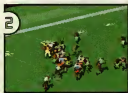


NCAA GAMEBREAKER

The graphics are no improvement over *Gameday*, but that was never a problem.



1 The triple option has always been my favorite play. The snap and first choice to the fullback...
2...now the quarterback cuts to the outside...
3...then, at the last minute, he pitches to the halfback who cuts the corner for yardage.



Other than being the only College Football game yet available on the PlayStation, *Gamebreaker* is also significant because it is a sneak peek at what *Gameday '97* is going to look like, and from what we've seen, it's more good news for football fans.

Gamebreaker features 122 teams, 110 stadiums, home and away uniforms, complete statistical tracking, over 400 plays, injuries, three difficulty levels, and a fully interactive sideline (bench players and chain gang can and will be run into on sweeps), plus the developers have fixed some of the flaws in *Gameday*.

It plays at a faster speed that can be adjusted to the players preference. The ball is no longer tipped around until someone picks it off.

What *Gamebreaker* does is take a winning football engine (*Gameday*), flush out the flaws, add college rules, teams, and plays to make one sweet looking and playing game. And that should be good enough to be the best College Football game on the market.

Next month, I'll have the definitive reviews of *Gamebreaker*, *Madden '97* and *QBC '97*, as well as a chart to give you the ultimate football buying guide. The second generation of 32-bit football games is definitely an improvement, and I'm sure you'll agree that it's about time.

PREVIEW
SATURN

セガ サターン

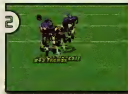


QUARTERBACK CLUB

The player's numbers on the jerseys should be a football game standard.



1 Great motion-capture really makes the quarterback's drop look real.
2 Talk about detail, the faces even rotate on the ball.
3 Watching the tackle in action is incredible. He hits hard and uses his arms to drag his victim down.



Are you ready for some football? You've seen *Madden '97* and its vast improvements, but the race for best football game ain't over yet. With *Gameday '97* still to come and the vastly improved *QBC '97*, it's going to be a real race to the top.

What *QBC '97* has to offer is some crisp, but pixelly graphics, some real nice motion-capture, the NFL and players' license, and some smooth gameplay. But what separates *QBC '97* are player's numbers on the backs of their jerseys, the ability to create your own camera angle, and the most sophisticated tackling I've come across. When

a player makes a tackle, his arms actually wrap around the ball carrier as he drags him to the ground. With detail like that, *QBC '97* makes a strong entry as a third competitor for best football game. Forget all about last year's dismal *QBC*, because this game is head and shoulders better than that one. If the gameplay can keep coming along, then *QBC '97* is going to be a solid game, giving us even more pleasin options for our pleasure.

REVIEW PC CD-ROM



コンピューターゲーム



NHL POWERPLAY

The PlayStation and Saturn versions of *NHL PowerPlay '96* scored big with polygon players and smooth

gameplay, but the PC version just doesn't capture the same playability and graphics. As compared to other PC hockey titles, *PowerPlay* is defi-

nitely in an elite class along with EA's *NHL '96*, which is exactly the title that the developers at Radical so obviously borrowed from.

The usual FMV, camera options, and useless extras aren't included in *PowerPlay*, but what is included is a fast-playing hockey sim with all the real players and a load of fun. The graphics look almost identical to EA's *NHL '95*, with the classic top-down view providing the player with the best angle to control all the players on the ice. Where *PowerPlay* separates itself from the EA games is in the attention to player AI, so each player in the game reacts more like their real-life counterpart on the ice. While *PowerPlay* for the PC can't even compare with console hockey, it is a solid PC effort.



1 The ability to set strategy is now for console hockey games, but on the PC this is old hat. 2 Snapshots from the point arena as fast or hard as on the console, but still are great fun. 3 You can even enter into an all-pro world tournament for variety.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	7
MUSIC	6
SOUND EFFECTS	6

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	9
BALANCE	9
DEPTH	8

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	7
PRESENTATION	5
INNOVATION	7

RATING

7.6

REVIEW SATURN



セガ サターン



VIRTUAL OPEN TENNIS

A couple times a year the tennis games come across my desk and whether it's *Pete Sampras*, *Andre Agassi*, or *Virtual*

Open Tennis, they all seem to have one thing in common: they're quite boring. Basically, a tennis game is pong without walls or the control.

What makes a tennis game good or bad is almost always control. If it's so hard to position the little polygonal man over the ball to hit it, then the

game is absolutely not fun. The key is to make the challenge in placing your shots rather than simply hitting them once you're there. No tennis game has ever done this correctly.

The views and control are playable, but playing against the computer is absolutely hopeless, unless you're some kind of miracle worker. That doesn't mean *Virtual Open Tennis* isn't decent tennis, because it really is one of the better ones out. It's just that tennis games really haven't advanced in far too long.



1 There's no denying that the graphics in *Virtual Open Tennis* are real sharp. 2 One real good idea is placing colored markers where the ball is going to hit. 3 The diving hit is a treat to see and nearly impossible to pull off.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	8
MUSIC	6
SOUND EFFECTS	8

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	5
BALANCE	6
DEPTH	6

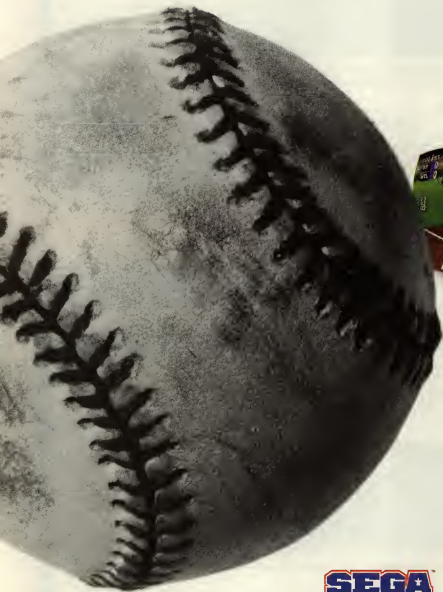
SPECIAL

EXTRAS	6
PRESENTATION	5
INNOVATION	8

RATING

6.4

COORS FIELD.®
THE WIND IS BLOWING
OUT TO LEFT,
AND YOUR BUDDY'S
HANGING CURVE LOOKS
ABOUT THIS BIG.



Grapefruit. Just hanging there for you to swat like a big round piñata. You might not get this chance again. After all, it's Coors Field®, where the air is your friend. And who knows, your next game will probably be at Tiger Stadium®, where the outfield is so deep you have to change area codes to call back to the bullpen. In fact, *World Series Baseball™ II* has all 28 Major League™ ballparks, replicated in 3-D detail so accurate you can practically see



the peanut shells in general admission. Not to mention all the teams, players, rosters, stats, ratings – heck, even their photos as they're announced at the plate. It's all here. Along with five different ballpark perspectives, off-the-bat camera angles, CD stereo sound. You know, icing on the cake stuff that makes *World Series Baseball™ II* so real, you expect to see commercials between innings. But you won't. Thank goodness.



For more info, visit
Sega's web site at
<http://www.sega.com>
or on Compuserve at
GO SEGA.



World Series Baseball™ II. Also available on Genesis as World Series Baseball™ '96.



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permission. TOS. Phone required. Sega of
America Canada 1-800-451-5252 US \$1.25/mf
(recorded/lat)



REVIEW

GENESIS

セカ ジュネシス

COLLEGE FOOTBALL USA '97

Originally EA's college football series was called *Bill Walsh College Football*, and even though the game is several years removed from that name,

the actual gameplay is still exactly the same.

For '97, the game includes all the division I teams and several larger division II teams. One big addi-

tion is the create-a-player option that allows you to put the real college players and their names into the game. Also new is the ability to create your own schedule, which is a

great way to play through the season against the kind of teams you want to match up against. The AI for the computer has been tweaked a little and is a tougher opponent, but beyond those minor adjustments, *CF '97* has done nothing to improve over last year's game. The graphics are still lacking, the playbook hasn't changed since the first game, and it plays exactly the same.

CF '97 is still a solid college football game, but unless the create-a-player option is real important to you, last year's game (or even the four year old *Bill Walsh College Football*) is all you need.



1 Every team including my alma mater WMU is in the game. 2 I finally got to start at QB for BYU! The create-a-player option is definitely the best part of this refresh. 3 Spin moves, hurdles, and speed bursts are all here, but that ain't new.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	1
MUSIC	1
SOUND EFFECTS	7

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	1
BALANCE	1
DEPTH	1

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	7
PRESENTATION	3
INNOVATION	1

RATING

6.5

REVIEW

PC CD-ROM



コンピューターゲーム

GREG NORMAN ULTIMATE CHALLENGE GOLF

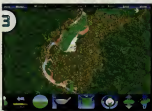
The one sport that the PC has always done a better job on than the consoles is golf. Even the worst PC golf games are head and shoulders above the

best the console has to offer. However fierce the competition on the PC is, with the *Links* and *PGA* series leading the way, the new *Greg Norman Ultimate Challenge Golf*

Grolier is hoping to enter that elite and illustrious pack.

The game can be played with the traditional arcade-style swing meter, or you can play it as a course

management style game. You can even input your own golf swing into the game and try to manage your slice on a pro course! When playing the course management mode, you have to worry about wind, lie, draw, elevated tees, and even the type of ball you're playing. The game is as complete a simulator as I've ever seen, and the menu is actually pretty easy to use. This year's version of *Greg Norman* looks, feels, and plays real tight and is in the same class as the best. *PGA* and *Links* still play smoother, but the immense detail put into the game and the simulation options can't be matched.



1 The detailed menu is surprisingly simple. 2 Greg Norman and his swing are in the game — he even tells you how to blow a huge lead in the finals. 3 The course is tough, pretty, and detailed.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	1
MUSIC	1
SOUND EFFECTS	7

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	7
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	10

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	10
PRESENTATION	7
INNOVATION	1

RATING

8.0

RATED

So your dog ate your last few issues of *Ultra Game Players*, and now you're faced with horrible prospect of buying games without our say-so. Don't

along with the issue number that the original full-length review appeared so you can restock your inventory. So go easy on that dog, OK?

worry. Packed onto these pages you'll find scores for the last few month's worth of games,

When a game is really good, we give it our **ULTRA Award**. We don't hand these things out to just any game—it's got to get past the most grueling review system in the biz and



still come through with at least a 9.0 rating. That ain't easy! Recent ULTRA Award winners are shown below in a special red bar with black text. Don't miss out on these games!!!

Alien Trilogy

PS2: SONY

ISS NO. 81

RATING **9.1**

Alone in the Dark

SAT: SONY

ISS NO. 80

RATING **7.9**

Arcade Classics

PS2: SONY

ISS NO. 80

RATING **3.2**

Baku Baku

SAT: SONY

ISS NO. 87

RATING **8.5**

Bass Master Classic Pro Edition

PS2: YAMAHA

ISS NO. 86

RATING **8.0**

Battle Arena Toshinden 2

PS2: PLAYSTATION

ISS NO. 86

RATING **8.3**

Battle Arena Toshinden Remix

SAT: SONY

ISS NO. 85

RATING **8.1**

Bogey Dead 6

PS2: SONY

ISS NO. 87

RATING **7.2**



SPOTLIGHT ON: BAKU BAKU

Puzzle games may be a dime a dozen, but great puzzle games are hard to find! *Baku Baku* manages to mix its hilarious cartoon style with super-addictive action. This two-player mode will have you and a friend hooked in no time!

Bugs Bunny: Double Trouble

PS2: SONY

ISS NO. 87

RATING **3.0**

Bust-A-Move 2

PS2: ACCLAIM

ISS NO. 87

RATING **8.6**

Clockwork Knight 2

SAT: SONY

ISS NO. 83

RATING **7.9**

College Slam

PS2: ACCLAIM

ISS NO. 83

RATING **6.9**

Congo

SAT: SONY

ISS NO. 85

RATING **5.9**

Cosmic Race

PS2: BONEA

ISS NO. 86

RATING **0.0**

Creature Shock

PS2: DATACAST

ISS NO. 84

RATING **2.8**

Cyberdillo

PS2: PARADOX

ISS NO. 84

RATING **6.3**

Darius Gaiden

SAT: ACCLAIM

ISS NO. 83

RATING **5.3**

Descent

PS2: STRATEGY

ISS NO. 83

RATING **8.4**

Earthworm Jim

SAT: PLAYSTATION

ISS NO. 84

RATING **8.1**

Fade to Black

PS2: MALKINCOGAMES

ISS NO. 84

RATING **7.5**

F-1 Challenge

SAT: VIBRA

ISS NO. 80

RATING **8.7**

Gex

PS2: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

ISS NO. 80

RATING **8.1**

Golden Axe: The Duel

SAT: SONY

ISS NO. 87

RATING **6.3**

Guardian Heroes

SAT: SONY

ISS NO. 86

RATING **8.6**

Gun Griffon

SAT: SONY

ISS NO. 87

RATING **8.2**

International Track & Field

PS2: SONY

ISS NO. 84

RATING **8.4**

Iron Storm

SAT: ACCLAIM

ISS NO. 84

RATING **9.5**

Jumping Flash! 2

PS2: SONY

ISS NO. 84

RATING **9.2**

Krazy Ivan

PS2: SONY INTERACTIVE

ISS NO. 82

RATING **8.2**

Legend of Oasis

SAT: SONY

ISS NO. 83

RATING **8.4**

Lufia II: Rise of the Sinistrals

PS2: NATSINK

ISS NO. 86

RATING **8.5**

ビデオ ゲーム おさらい

ビデオ ゲーム おさらい

THIS MONTH'S TOP PICKS

1	Super Mario 64	N64	Rating: 10
2	Nights	SAT	Rating: 9.3
3	Pilotwings 64	N64	Rating: 9.0
4	Crash Bandicoot	PS	Rating: 8.8
5	Ridge Racer Revolution	PS	Rating: 8.1

#1



Magic Carpet

PF - ELECTRONIC

ISS NO. 51

RATING 8.4

Mohawk and Headphone Jack

WIN95 - BLACK PEARL SOFTWARE

ISS NO. 52

RATING 7.1

Museum Classics Vol. 1

PS - BANCO

ISS NO. 53

RATING 6.6

Need for Speed

PC - ELECTRONIC ARTS

ISS NO. 51

RATING 8.4

Night Warriors

SAT - CAPCOM

ISS NO. 51

RATING 8.2

Olympic Soccer

PF - EA GOLF

ISS NO. 52

RATING 8.3

Olympic Summer Games

WIN95 - BLACK PEARL

ISS NO. 52

RATING 5.7

Panzer Dragoon II Zwei

N64 - THQ

ISS NO. 52

RATING 9.0

Philosoma

PF - SONY

ISS NO. 52

RATING 6.5

Psychic Detective

SGE - ELECTRONIC ARTS

ISS NO. 52

RATING 2.8

Raven Project

PS - MINDSCAPE

ISS NO. 52

RATING 5.2

Resident Evil

PS - CAPCOM

ISS NO. 52

RATING 9.2

Return Fire

PF - TIME WARNER INTERACTIVE

ISS NO. 51

RATING 8.3

Rise 2 Resurrection

PF - ANIMATED DIGITAL

ISS NO. 52

RATING 3.7

Road Rash

PS - ELECTRONIC ARTS

ISS NO. 52

RATING 7.3

Road Rash

SAT - ELECTRONIC ARTS

ISS NO. 52

RATING 6.3

Robo Pit

PS - THQ

ISS NO. 52

RATING 7.6

Romance of the Three Kingdoms

PS - KOEI

ISS NO. 52

RATING 8.2

Shellshock

PF - VR HOLD

ISS NO. 52

RATING 7.8

Shining Wisdom

SAT - SOFTWARE

ISS NO. 51

RATING 7.3

Silverload

PF - POLYCOM

ISS NO. 52

RATING 8.3

Skeleton Wars

SAT - PLAYMATES

ISS NO. 52

RATING 7.9

Street Fighter Alpha

PS - CAPCOM

ISS NO. 52

RATING 8.7

Super Mario RPG

WIN95 - CAPCOM

ISS NO. 51

RATING 9.1

TEKKEN 2

PS - CAPCOM

ISS NO. 52

RATING 9.1



SPOTLIGHT ON: BOGEY DEAD 6

If you like your dogfights a little more on the action/arcade side, don't miss out on Sony's *Bogey Dead 6* for PlayStation. The graphics are sharp, the enemy pilots are cunning, and the split S will make you lose your lunch!

Time Killers

WIN95 - THQ

ISS NO. 52

RATING 1.9

Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3

SAT - MALLARD

ISS NO. 52

RATING 7.3

Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits

PS - WILLIAMS

ISS NO. 52

RATING 7.1

WipeOut

PS - POLYCOM

ISS NO. 52

RATING 9.1

Worms

SAT - GIGAWATT

ISS NO. 52

RATING 9.4

X-PERTS

WIN95 - SONY

ISS NO. 52

RATING 2.4

ビデオ ゲーム おさらい

ビデオ ゲーム おさらい

IT'LL BLOW YOUR *%#@#?& MIND!



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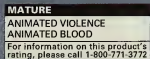


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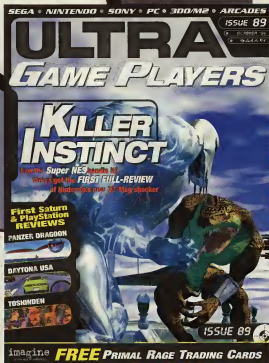
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ALL ACCESS

Let's face it — no matter how many times you beat a game, you just don't get the same level of satisfaction as you do from cheating the hell out of it. It is in that same glorious gaming spirit that we

proudly introduce All Access, our new and improved codes section. We've added extra strategies and hints to our usual line-up of cheats, so you can squeeze even more out of your favorite games. If

you uncover some hidden secret of your own, drop us a line at the usual address (c/o All Access), or even better, e-mail Roger (the Code Guy) at Roger_Burchill@qm.imagine-inc.com. Cheat away!

WILLIAMS ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS

WILLIAMS • PLAYSTATION

Mortal Kombat 3 Sound Test

1 Turn on the PlayStation without a CD inside and access the CD player from the menu. Now, insert the game CD and 2 tracks will be indicated on the screen. 2 Choose track 2 and select the play button on the screen. You will now hear over 5 minutes of MK3 sounds.



1



2



BAKU BAKU

SEGA • SATURN

League Mode

1 Press B, A, C, Up, B, A, C, Up, START at the Title Screen to access the League Mode. 2 This Mode can only be utilized with multiple players (2 to 5 players), but it is a great way of keeping track of stats.

3 One drawback of League Mode is that the text has not been translated from the original Japanese. Here is a breakdown of the six menu options on the League Mode screens:

1. The first menu item takes you into League Play, but the other options listed on the menu screen must be set prior to entering play. After setting the options, return to this menu item to select the players and a Vs. screen will appear.

2. The second menu item is where you enter the players' names. Since all the text is in Japanese just select a memorable Kanji character for each member of the League.

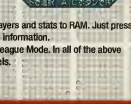
3. The third menu item lets you remove a player from the League. Just select a player from the list with A or C. Next, you will see a confirmation screen. Select the top item by pressing A or C to delete the player, or select the bottom item utilizing A or C (or pressing B at any time) cancelling the delete. This menu option only becomes active after players have been entered in menu item 2.

4. The fourth menu item holds 'stats' for all of the members of the

1



2



League. Once again, this menu option only becomes active after players have been entered in menu item 2.

5. The fifth menu item saves the players and stats to RAM. Just press A, then B on this screen to save the information.

6. The sixth menu item exits from League Mode. In all of the above screens, A or C selects and B cancels.

GUN GRIFFON

SEGA • SATURN

Special Apps

1 Enter the following codes at the Title Screen.

Invincible Armor — Down, C, C, A, START

Non-limited Jump Rockets — Up, Right, Down, Left, Z, START

Remove Targeting Squares — Left, Right, C, A, START

Attack Direction Indicator Radar — B, B, B, Down, C, START





TEKKEN 2

NAMCO • PLAYSTATION

Killer Combos

Move Key:

Right Punch - 1 Right Punch - 2 Left Kick - 3

Right Kick - 4 While Rising - WR Tap Buttons - O

Timing

Time Delay - (extra space)

Very Fast - (no space)



Heihachi



O+1, O+2, O+1,2
O+3, 2, 2, 4, 4, 1, 2, 1
O+3, 2, 2, 4, 4, 1, 4, 1, 2, 4
O+3, 2, 2, 4, 4, 1, 4, 1, 2, 1
O+3, 2, 2, 4, 4, 1, 4, 1, 2, 2



Lei



1, 2, 1, 3, 4, 2, 1, 4, 1, 4, 4
1, 2, 1, 3, 4, 2, 1, 4, 1, 2, 3



Jack-2



O+2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1,
O+1+2, 1+2
O+2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1+2, 1+2
O+1, 1, 4, 3, 4, 1, 2, 1, 1+2, 1+2
O+1, 1, 4, 3, 4, 1, 2, 1,
O+1+2, 1+2



Michelle



O+1, 2+3, 1
O+1, d+4, 1
O+2, 1, O+2
O+1, 1, 2+3, 1
2, 1, 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 1



Jun



1+4, 2, 4
1+4, 2, O+4
O+3, 4, 1+4, 2, 4
O+3, 4, 4, 4, 3
1+4, 2, 1, 4, 4, 4
1+4, 2, 1, 2, 2, 2
WR+2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 4, 3, 4+3



Nina



O+3, 2, 1, 4
1, 2, 1, 2
1, 2, F, F+3+4
O+3+4, 1, 2, 1, 2, 4
1, 2, 1, 2, 4, 3, 4, 2, 4, 3
1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 3, 2, 1, 2, 4



King



1, 2, 1, 1, 3, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1+2
1, 2, 1, 1, 3, 3, 4, 4, 1, 1
1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 4, 4, 4, 1, 3



Paul



O+2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1+2, 1+2
O+1, 1, 4, 3, 4, 1, 2, 1, 1+2, 1+2



Law



O+3, 3, 3, 3, 4 (repeat)
2, O+2, O+2
O+1, 3, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 4, 3, 4
O+1, 2, 2, 1, 3, 3, 4, 3, 4
O+1, 3, 2, 3, 3, 4, 3, 4



Yoshimitsu



O+1, 1, 1, 1, 1
O+3, 3, 3, 3, 3
O+2, O+2, O+2
1, 2, 1, 4, 4, 4, 1, 1, 1, 1
1, 2, 1, 4, 2, 2, 2, 4, 1, 1



NBA ACTION

SEGA • SATURN

Alley-Oop Dunk

Press the Right Shoulder Button + B+Up simultaneously to do an alley-oop.





NINTENDO 64

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GOLDEN AXE: THE DUEL

SEGA • SATURN

Short Loading

1 To shorten the load time between matches while playing in Vs. mode, pause the game when the winner's declaration appears (ex. "Milen Flare Wins"). 2 Then, press the Left Shoulder Button and a short-cut Select Mode will appear and allow the selection of fighters without going to the Character Select screen.



WARCRAFT II

BLIZZARD • PC CD-ROM



Take Your Pick

To use a cheat, hit enter as you would to chat. Type in the code to get the effect:

Glittering prizes

Gives you 10,000 gold, 5000 lumber and 5000 units of oil

It is a good day to die

Makes you invincible and grants one hit kill ability

Valdez

Adds 5000 oil

Hatchet

Makes your peasants chop wood in 2 strikes

Ucla

Displays "Go Bruins!"

Make it so

Speeds up building, training, and upgrading of units

Fastdemo

Makes demo scenes at the main menu start faster

Noglues

Disables magical traps

There can only be one

Goes directly to the endgame animation

Tombstone

Stops the Orc traps

Title

Enables & disables cheat mode while in the game and disables the intro screen

Every little thing she does

Gives all spells & renews mana to full at time of spell casting

Spycob

More oil

Day

Displays "FIEP" on the screen

Netprof

Laser light show

Tigerlily

Enables skipping levels (see next code)

Orc n -OR- human n

Skip to orc level #n -OR- human level #n

Deck me out

Upgrade all upgradable options (this does not upgrade buildings)

On screen

Toggle revealing the whole map and lifting the fog of war

Showpath

Toggle revealing the whole map, retain the fog of war

Never a winner

Allows you to continue playing even after objectives have been completed

Unite the clans

View victory sequence

You pitiful worm

View defeat sequence

SOLAR ECLIPSE

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS • SATURN

Disturbing Development

1 To access a secret level where you fight the heads of the game's developers, just pause the game at anytime and enter: Right, Down, Down, Left, E, Right, A, Z, Y.



3



NIGHTS

SEGA • SATURN



Ten Fast-Start Tips

- 1 Check the maps before playing each round. It will give you a better idea of the size and layout of each course.
- 2 Collect 20 gems in any level, and head for the depositing station. Avoid any gems that might be easy to pick up until you've deposited the first twenty. This will give you more bonus time to collect points and improve your score.
- 3 Do not turn in the big gem until just before time runs out. Use this time to increase your bonus points by collecting stars and gold gems.
- 4 Use the speed dash to build up your speed, but use it in short bursts to maintain control. Your speed will slowly diminish after a few quick dashes. Go as fast as you can while still maintaining control.
- 5 Press both trigger buttons at the same time for instantaneous braking. Use this for quick turnarounds and other emergency situations.
- 6 Work to master looping objects as opposed to the direct pick-up method for faster collection of items. Use speed bursts to close loops faster.
- 7 Loop or speed dash enemies for extra bonus points. It's pretty easy to simply ignore the enemies, but the bonus points are worth the effort.
- 8 Check the very top and bottom of each level for hidden items. Also check cracks and crevices in the landscape.
- 9 After flipping a switch, keep your eye open for results. Each switch does something different.
- 10 To access the final level, you'll need at least a C in each of the first three levels. Repeat each level until you've made the grade.



RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

NAMCO • PLAYSTATION



Extra Cars

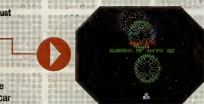
To access eight additional cars, you must destroy all the aliens in the *Galaga '88* game that appears during looping.

Time Trial Techniques

To beat any of the secret cars, use your rear view mirror and hit the car as it attempts to pass you. This will make any of the secret cars slow down considerably. Don't worry if the secret car passes you on the first lap, as it will wait for you to lap it before attempting to overtake you once again. But if the secret car passes you after it is lapped, it will be impossible to catch it again.

Buggy Cars

At the *Galaga '88* screen that says "That Is Galactic Dancing", press and hold L1+RT+Down+SELECT. When the enemies start attacking, continue holding down those buttons and press the Triangle button to shoot. This will enable the homing laser and give you a perfect score, as well as activate the super-cool buggy cars when the racing begins.



Secret Cars

To access the following secret cars, finish first on the three regular tracks in Race mode, then defeat the indicated car on its respective track in Time Trial mode:



Track: Novice

13th Racing (Black Griffin) Car

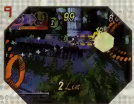
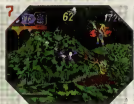


Track: Intermediate
13th Racing Kid Car



Track: Expert

White Angel Car



Extra Tracks

1. Novice
2. Intermediate
3. Expert

By coming in first on all three tracks, you will gain the ability to race the tracks again in reverse.



4. To race in Mirror mode, start a race normally. Drive a short distance from the starting grid and here around. Now, with the solid wall in front of you, accelerate to 80 mph and when your car hits the wall it will break through and you will be racing on an inverted track.



More Tricks

360-Degree Spinning Mode

Highlight the "Select" option on the Pre-Race Screen. Hold down **Signers+X** and select your track, car, transmission, etc., using the **START** button. After making your selections, highlight the "Start" option on the Pre-Race Screen while still holding **Signers+X** and **SELECT**, then press the **START** button to begin the race. Keep holding everything until the race is about to begin. You will be asked by the computer to try 360 degree spins on some corners during the race. Your spinning skills will be rated each time on a scale from 0-100.

Secret Bonus — If you let all 40 aliens pass by and get a score of 0 in *Galaga '88*, a single firework burst

will go off and the words "Secret Bonus" will flash on screen. Go to the "Other" screen and you will now have the option to set the race setting from Normal, Morning, Evening and Night.

Toggle Mirror — While racing in the first person perspective, pause and press **Triangle+L1** to toggle the rearview mirror on or off.

External View Zoom — In external view, pause and hold down **Triangle** and press **L1** or **R1** to zoom in or out. Press both together to reset.

Light Tricks — Holding down **L1** and **R1** at the main Title screen enables the ability to control the spotlight. Use the directional keys and other buttons to alter settings. **L1** and **R1** must be held down at all times.



GAME SHARK CODES

In order for Game Shark codes to work properly, you must first own a Game Shark!

Playstation Codes



Big Hurt Baseball

Team 1 always wins... **80173bd8000f**

Dark Stalkers

Infinite Health Player 1... **800cd1e00090**

Infinite Health Player 2... **800cd5140090**

PO'd

Infinite Health... **80075e400064**

Have Jetpack... **8009aba80032**

8009ac700100

Skeleton Warriors

Infinite Health... **801db7600064**

Infinite StarSword... **801db7740064**

Infinite Lives... **801db7680064**

Top Gun

Infinite AGM Missiles... **801cfcc00064**

Infinite MIRV Missiles... **801cfcc00064**

Infinite Surefires... **801cfcc00064**

Saturn Codes



Big Hurt Baseball

Master Code... **F6000914C305**

B60028000000

Player 1 Always Wins... **160adba80500**

Player 2 Always Wins... **160adba80500**

Golden Axe: The Duel

Master Code... **F6000914C305**

B60028000000

Infinite Health Player 1... **16078b5c0080**

Infinite Health Player 2... **16078b5c0080**

Road Rash

Master Code... **F6000914C305**

B60028000000

Infinite Cash... **1607407effff**

Have Stiletto Bike... **160740740709**

Skeleton Warriors

Master Code... **F6000914C305**

B60028000000

Infinite StarSword... **1607ebca0064**

Infinite Lives... **1607ebbc0064**

Infinite Health... **1607ebbb0064**

SUPER MARIO 64 TIPS

NINTENDO • NINTENDO 64



We've jotted down tips on finding the first several stars — all the ones you can earn from the first four courses. Keep your eyes on these pages in future issues for more tips and tricks for this classic game!

Course One

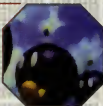
• Go up the mountain and defeat the Bomb King for a star. To beat the Bomb King, simply run around behind him, grab him and throw him three times.

• Re-enter the Course and talk to the giant Koopa turtle standing near the start. He'll want to race to the top of the mountain. He'll cheat, but you've got to stay on the path or he'll put up a fuss. Make it to the goal first and earn a star.

• There's a big Chomp chained to a post near the start of the course. Avoid his attacks and jump on top of the post that he's chained to. Stomp on it three times and you'll release the Chomp, who charges through a nearby gate, revealing a star.

• Find and talk to the pink bomb guy (which activates all the cannons), then use the cannon at ground level to launch yourself up to a floating island, where you'll find a red block, a tree, another cannon, and a star.

• You can also use the cannon mentioned above to fire yourself through a series of mid-air rings made up of gold coins. If you can manage to target the middle coin in each ring (there are five), you'll earn a star.



Course Two

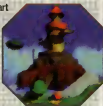
• After you've already found a few stars, you'll be able to find an owl hidden in a tree near the start — just climb to the top and he flies out. Jump up and grab onto the owl when he flies low (line up with his shadow, then press and hold the jump button to leap up and then hang on). Once the owl soars as high as possible, look for a floating box with a star in it. Steer the owl towards the box, then drop in and nab your star.

• Climb to the very top of the castle to find a star waiting there.

• Talk to the pink bomb guy to activate the cannon, then hop in and look around. You'll notice two tall walls near you, one on each side of a wide slide that leads into a shallow pool. Blast yourself at the corner of the wall on the right to shatter it and reveal a star.

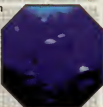
• Near the top of the Course you'll find two square, stone giants. Beyond them you'll find an even larger version. Wait for him to get close and leap at you, then dodge out of the way. While he's lying face-down, stomp on his back. Do this three times to get a star.

• Use the cannon to reach the ledge under the flagpole, where you'll find another pole that leads to an even lower ledge that holds a star.



Course Three

• Swim to the sunken ship and look for the eel who lives in the entrance. Swim past him and return to the surface. When you dive back down a second time, you'll notice that the eel has left, allowing you to enter. Once inside, open the treasure chests in the right order and the ship rises to the surface. You have to leap from platform to slippery platform to reach the star on the other side of the ship.



• Find and talk to the pink bomb guy to activate the Course's only cannon, then launch yourself towards the top of the left-most spire. From there, Mario can leap to a nearby ledge that holds a star.

• Look for a large underwater passageway near the ship area. If you swim through, you'll find an underground cavern filled with air. Run around to the other side of the cavern to find another series of treasure chests. Once again, open them in the right order for a star.

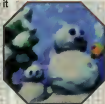
• After finding the first few stars of this level, return and look for the eel once again, who has taken to living in a small hole near where the ship was. Swim near the eel to lure him out — he'll only strike at first, but if you hang around, he'll swim all the way out. Look at his tail — there's a star! Swim close and try to grab it from above. It may take a few tries before you can nab the star without bumping into the eel, so be patient.

• Once you've found and activated the green switch, go back to Course Three and hit the green block on a platform near the ship area to become Metal Mario. This will allow Mario to sink to the bottom of the water, where he can nab the star that sits atop the strong current.

Course Four

• Right at the start you find a small house. Jump in the chimney and you enter a snow slide. Make it to the bottom and you win a star (even if you use the shortcut).

• Find the baby penguin wandering around, then use the B button to pick it up. Carry it down to the big penguin at the bottom of the mountain, and it will reward you with a star.



• After reuniting the big penguin with its child, return to the Course and enter the small house at the start through the chimney — the penguin will be waiting to race you! Win (without cheating) and you'll earn a star.

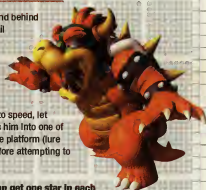
• Once you've found the first few stars on this Course, look for an orange and green pedestal on the other side of the 'slide house'. There should be a large snowball there. Talk to it, and it will race you down the mountain. You must beat the snowball to the bottom (without cheating) and stand just in front of the snowman head there — the snowball will grow larger as it rolls down the hill and then collide with the head, forming one big snowman. For all this craziness, you get a star.

• Use the cannon at the bottom of the trolley to reach the cliff at the far side. Follow the cliffside around to a small ledge blocked by those nasty 'propeller-heads'. Get past them and do a long jump over the pit. Now you're in a kind of vertical maze of ledges that hold red coins. Grab them all for a star.

Bowser

• To beat Bowser, run around behind him and grab him by the tail using the B button, then slowly begin to move the analog stick in a 360-degree circular motion, rotating it faster and faster as Bowser gains momentum. Once he's up to speed, let him fly! Your goal is to toss him into one of the mines that surround the platform (lure Bowser close to a mine before attempting to grab and throw him).

• Don't forget that you can get one star in each level for finding eight red coins, and one for 100 gold coins (except in Bowser's stage).



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N64.COM

NEWS

STRATEGIES

REVIEWS



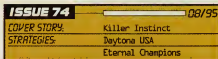
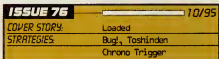
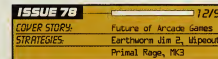
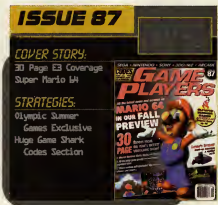
ULTRA
GAME PLAYERS

BACK ISSUES

Remember way back when we were just plain old *Game Players*? Well, you can relive those glory days by ordering our back issues. You wouldn't believe some of the crazy stuff we used to get away

with! Ahhh, youth. Anyways, if you're interested, just send us \$5.95 per issue (check or money order, US funds only, please) to *Game Players* Back Issues, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Just think about

the outrageous cash you'll be able to get for a complete collection of old-style *Game Players* magazines in only a short couple of years — you could retire and just play videogames all day!



ULTRA GP GAMESHOP

See anything you like? Don't worry, it's on us!

Welcome, gamer! You have just entered the ULTRA GP GameShop. Here you'll find many exquisite items that we've collected from all over the world, from the top gaming districts of Japan, to our own Silicon Valley. We're here to offer loyal ULTRA Game Players readers the chance to win loads of cool prizes each and every month. We seek out the hard to find collectibles, the stuff that the average gamer can't get his hands on. We also offer many ways to win, so that everyone has a real chance to get in on the action!

HOW TO ENTER...

It wouldn't be fair to let just anyone enter our contests. We reserve the privilege solely for real hard-core gamers, and we weed out the casual players who just want to clog up our mail bin with extra entries. So, to prove that you really deserve the cool stuff listed on the next few pages, we're going to have to put you to the test. We've racked our brains to come up with **30 videogame-related trivia questions**, ones that only serious gamers will know the answers to. Each correctly answered question will earn you one point, for a maximum of 30 points for 30 correct answers. You can spend your points anyway you like — you can divide them up between multiple contests or blow them all on one big prize. The number of points needed to enter a contest is listed next to the prize name. To enter a contest (or contests), write down the contest number(s) on a

post card, along with the trivia answers to prove you've earned enough points (list the question number first, then the answer), and don't forget to also **answer our tie-breaker question**, which will be used in the event of a tie. Send the post card to:

ULTRA GP GameShop / October
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA 94005.

All entries must be received by November 10, 1996.
Winners will be notified by mail. Now get to it!



Mystery Game (2 points/10 winners)

- PlayStation game
- Saturn game

Here at ULTRA Game Players, we don't pay a dime for our games — and now we're passing the savings along to you! To win a free Saturn or PlayStation game, all you have to do is answer two measly questions and drop a card in the mail. Don't forget to let us know what format you prefer. We'll chose the game, but we'll try to pick you a winner.

Music CDs (8 points/ 2 winners)

2

Game music CDs are big business in Japan, and their composers are considered among chart-topping pop stars. Now you can jam to your favorite game tunes, most of which have been remixed. Please specify which package you're entering for.



Package A

- Final Fantasy Orchestra
- Yoshi's Island
- Super Donkey Kong
- Virtual-On Cybertroopers

a

Package B

- Virtua Fighter 1&2
- Tekken 2 remixes vol. 2
- Katak: The Blood
- Virtual-On Cybertroopers



We've put together package A with the typical Nintendo fan in mind, while package B is mere for the hard-core fighting fan.

OCTOBER CONTEST QUESTIONS

1. What games featured Mario's first appearance?
2. Mario hasn't always been the hero. In what game was he the bad guy?
3. What is the path that Link must take through the Lost Forest in the original *Legend of Zelda*?
4. Which of the following Nintendo games did game-god Shigeru Miyamoto not work on?
[A] *Super Mario Bros.* [B] *Unrascers* [C] *Excitebike* [D] *Popeye*
5. *Street Fighter*'s Ryu and Ken both studied under the same master. What was his name?
6. What is the fastest class in the first *Megaworld*?
7. Nintendo's Kirby first appeared on what system?
8. Alexey Pajitnov was the sole designer of what classic videogame?
9. Yuji Naka is the creator of *Nights*, and what other famous Sega character?
10. In Japan, Eggman is the name for what famous Sega bad guy?
11. Name one of the first two NES games to use a password save feature.
12. Which Nintendo character starred in his own NES and Gameboy games, but never appeared on Super NES?
13. In Sony's *Jumping Flash!* series, who does Robbit work for?
14. Name three games that the Super NES launched with in the US.
15. What game was originally packed-in with the Genesis?
16. Before *Doom*, id Software cut its teeth on what legendary first-person PC shooter?
17. *Gunsler Heroes*, *Dynamite Headley* and *Castleblanca* on the Super NES all shared the same incredible development group — who are they?

TIE-BREAKER



3

Motor Toon GP (5 points/1 winner)

• Motor Toon GP Japanese game / T-shirt

It was an injustice that the first *Motor Toon GP* was never released here in the states. It wasn't the best game by any means, but it was still a pretty fun ride. Now that the sequel is getting set to introduce the series to American audiences, we're offering you the chance to win the original Japanese version of the game, plus a limited-edition T-shirt. No *Motor Toon* fan should be without it!



4



Sega Art Books (8 points/1 winner)

- Sega Videogame classic illustrations
- Virtua Fighter 2 image collection
- Virtual-On Cybertroopers strategy guide / art book

One of the coolest things about going to Japan is that you get to bring back tons of cool videogame art books. You just can't get this kind of quality stuff outside of Japan, and that's a shame because these books are extremely well-done, and highly collectible. Inside of each one, you'll find glossy full-color artwork and game images that are just perfect for the hard-core gamer's coffee table. Unless you can read Japanese, you won't have a clue what's being said, but who cares?

5

Tekken 2 Print (2 points/10 winners)

These deluxe giant prints feature a beautifully-rendered scene of Klag in his church setting. Hey, this ain't no cheap, poster you're talkin' about here — the heavy paper stock means that you can hang it up in pride, and the image is cool enough that you won't look like some game nerd.



6

Killer Instinct package (8 points/3 winners)

- KI Super NES game
- KI hat
- KI T-shirt

Okay, so *Killer Instinct* is kind of an old game already, but for those of you

who never managed to scam your own copy, now you can scam it off of us! Hey, we'll even throw in a *KI* hat and T-shirt so you can look stylin' when you go to the arcade (just don't lose while wearin' 'em — you'd never live it down).



?

You are Mario. You've just reached the top of the Koopa Castle and found the Princess. Unfortunately, Bowser's there, too. And he's not fooling around this time. You notice several layers of dynamite strung around the princess, binding her arms. Tucked away in a far corner of the room you catch

a glimpse of Toad, who has apparently gone into shock and is mumbling pure gibberish to himself. Bowser's finger is on a remote detonator. The castle is beginning to crumble. Your only escape is an open window on the far wall, but Bowser is blocking your way. In 30 words or less, what do you do?

?

18. In which one of the following Nintendo games did Mario drop by to make a quick cameo appearance?
 (A) *Donkey Kong Country* (B) *Ten-Star* (C) *Mike Tyson's Punch Out!!*
 (D) *The Legend of Zelda*

19. Before *Crash Bandicoot*, the developers at Naughty Dog needed a cool, four-dimensional character to lead a team of characters with what bloody 3D00 fighter?

20. In the original *Super Mario Bros.*, what are the lowest possible individual stages you need to enter in order to save the Princess?

21. Take the number of CPUs in the Saturn and multiply it by the number of tracks in the original *Daytona USA*. What's 3000? Now, what average grade would that number earn you in *Nights*?

22. Who are the only two characters that have appeared in every *Street Fighter* game ever made?

23. What game originally shipped with the US version of NEC's failed game system?

24. We all know that Crash is a bandicoot, but what the hell is a bandicoot?

(A) A relative of the Tasmanian Devil (B) A head (C) A type of dog
 (D) A large rat

25. Who are the only two playable characters to appear in the original *Street Fighter*?

26. Which great arcade game is Sega's answer to the question "What if you could shoot your way out of the box?"
 (A) *Fighting Vipers* (B) *Virtua Fighter* (C) *Last Bronx* (D) *Daytona USA*

27. What does "SEGA" stand for?

28. What fighting game character is the strongest woman in the world?

29. Name three of the ghost monsters in the original *Pac-Man*.

30. Which *Mortal Kombat* character is named after one of the game's designers?
 (A) Johnny Cage (B) Mook Salhot
 (C) Liu Kang (D) Reptile



7

Sony PlayStation & Crash Bandicoot package

(10 points/3 winners)

- Sony PlayStation system
- Crash Bandicoot
- Crash T-shirt & Hat



So you say you've got the blues because you can't play Sony's awesome new *Crash Bandicoot* because you don't have a PlayStation? Well, your friends at GameShop don't like for you to have the blues. Here 'em both!



8

Nintendo 64 & Super Mario 64

(10 points/3 winners)

- Nintendo 64 system
- Super Mario 64



We're not sure if any of you will really care, but what the heck, we've got three Nintendo 64's just cluttering up our office, and we'd love to get rid of 'em. While we're at it, we might as well toss in a copy of *Super Mario 64* with each one, just so you'll have something to play on it when you win. I mean, most people have never even heard of this thing. I hope you guys are interested...

9

Sega Saturn & Nights package

(10 points/3 winners)

- Sega Saturn system
- Nights w/Analog Control Pad
- Nights T-Shirt
- Nights Cap

If you don't have a Saturn, you need one. With so many great exclusive arcade hits coming home for the holidays, you can't afford to wait any longer. What's that? You don't have any spare cash right now? Not a problem. The friendly folks at Sega want to help you out. Win our contest, and not only will you get a free Saturn, but you'll also get a special *Nights* package!



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2 **ARCADE MACHINE**

10

SF package A (8 points/1 winner)

- Street Fighter Zero 2 strategy guide/art book
- Chun-Li playing cards

Even though the text is in Japanese, this *Street Fighter Zero (Alpha)* II strategy guide is chock-full of full-color, step-by-step graphics and great SF illustrations from the famous Capcom art staff. Also included in this package is a cool deck of *Street Fighter* playing cards, featuring the lovely Chun-Li. It even includes the controversial shower scene!



12

SF package B (5 points/5 winners)

- Set of SF key chains

These little things are just too cool! Straight from Japan and extremely hard to come by, we're offering five full sets of these keychains to only the most dedicated *Street Fighter* fanatics.



11

SF package C (8 points)

- Capcom Illustrations art book
- Street Fighter II Animated Movie art book

Our very own Chris Slate is a proud owner of a copy of the Capcom Illustrations book, and he gives it his highest recommendation. If you like the *Street Fighter* art style, or are just a big fan of Capcom's games, you'll go absolutely bananas over it. Also included is a SF comic, based on the hit Japanese animated movie.



13

Street Fighter Alpha 2 Coin-Op (15 points/1 winner)

This is it, fellow gamers, the ultimate prize for the month of October — your very own *Street Fighter Alpha 2* arcade machine!! Now, we'd just love to keep this one ourselves, so don't feel like you have to enter right away, or anything. Just take your time and let us have our fun.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

NETWORK

PLUG IN



CHRIS



MIKE



BILL



PATRICK



ROGER

WELCOME TO NETWORK

Boot up, dial in and log on — it's time to load up this month's Network! This is the place where you can hook up with **ULTRA Game Players** writers, industry experts and players worldwide and talk shop.

We're 100% about videogames — you won't find any other fluff in here taking up space. If you have any comments, compliments, criticisms or complaints, we want to hear about it. Just drop us a line at the address below. Now let's talk games!

ULTRA GAME PLAYERS
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA 94005

THE BEST GAME?

• I'd like to know what the criteria is for a game getting the hallowed 100% (besides being a great game). What I mean is, can one reviewer make the 100% call, or would everyone (including Bill!) have to be in agreement? I ask this because I'm getting the feeling that *Mario 64* is going to be the first 100% rated game. I say this not from personal experience, but from the general feeling I'm getting by the way everyone at *Game Players* is falling all over this game. I ask this only out of curiosity (I personally believe that *VF 2* should have gotten 100%, even though I own a Playstation).

Richard D Ferry
rickf1@juno.com

<<<Chris>>> Well Richard, as you can see for yourself on page 86, I did indeed give *Super Mario 64* a perfect

score of 10. However, that decision wasn't without its fair share of controversy here at the office. While most everyone agrees that *Mario* is the best game they've ever seen, the real debate is whether or not any game can truly be considered 'perfect'. My take on it is this: sooner or later a game will come along that will raise the bar even higher, but for right now there just isn't a better game than *Mario*. Every aspect of that game is just awesome. So, does that mean that there wasn't a single thing in the game that couldn't have been done better? Probably not. But realistically, in comparison to everything else that's out there, this game is king of the hill.

HE READ OUR MINDS

• Hey, you know what I'm thinking? Put your mag (the best mag) on CD. Just think about that. You could put motion pictures of videogames on it. Parts of interviews could be on it. All the things you can think of could be on it (including Bill's imaginary friends!) Your mag would go from 'superior', to becoming the 'god of all mags'. You could still make a separate magazine for the people without CD-playing computers. This would be the future of gaming info! Jason Schildt
Fort Atkinson, WI

<<<Chris>>> You read our minds, Jason! Starting next month, *ULTRA Game Players* will come packed with a disc loaded with high-quality movies of all the hottest games coming down the line. You can also look forward to future industry interviews, interactive strategy guides, and lots more. And for those of you who don't have access to a computer, don't worry — we'll still be offer-

ing copies of the mag without CD. It's about time somebody thought of this, don't you think?

FAVORITE THINGS

• I own a Genesis, a Sega CD and a 32X. I hate it that every time I read about a game for both Sega and Nintendo, it says that Nintendo's version is better. I understand that most games are. Some are better on the Sega, but they still get rated worse than Nintendo. Don't get me wrong, I like the Super NES and Nintendo, but I think it's unfair. Also, you say that SegaCD and 32X are a waste of money. I love them and play them more than the Genesis. I know most games for them are less than perfect, but they're as fun as heck. The graphics don't matter (unless it's so blurry you don't see a darn thing). What matters is the gameplay. Sega is putting fewer games out for these systems, but the ones they are putting out are awesome. One last thing — if you rated *Wing Commander* for SegaCD, what did you give it? Jason (Bogey) Bogavich
Canal Fulton, OH

<<<Roger>>> Okay 'Bogey', I was going to overlook the nickname thing, but when you stated that you still play your 32X and Sega CD, you lost all credibility. Face it Jason, you're still in the denial stage of having followed Sega's yellow brick road to Crap City. Graphics may not be the most important element of a game, but if they didn't matter at all, we'd all still be playing *Pong*. Seek some professional therapy

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 144



Is *Super Mario 64* really the perfect game? Can any game, no matter how good, truly be considered 'perfect'? See Richard Ferry's letter...

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Chat Room

Where Are The Games?

>>> Crono

Nintendo has done well with hardware, but what about games? I dislike Sega, but it has done a better job of putting out Genesis titles than Nintendo has done for the Super NES. However, when the games do come out, Nintendo's seem to be much better quality. I plan to buy an N64, but if the games are not there, then there will be no point.

Well...

>>> Giant Robo

Some people accuse Nintendo of not having many titles. Well, the system is only three weeks old. How many titles did Saturn and PlayStation had when they came out in Japan? The Super-arcade, the system with the greatest library in the history of console gaming, had only four games at launch. So you are worrying about nothing.

What people are talking about at Ultra GP Online...

Wrong

>>> Drew

First off, it's Genesis that has the most games. Also, it was Sega who dominated, not Nintendo. Also, RPGs are a big market and getting bigger everyday. I also think that there isn't enough games for the Nintendo 64. I mean, all the good games won't be out until Christmas except Mario. I'd get a Saturn.

Don't be so impatient

>>> Nintendo Loyalist

Nintendo made all those delays so that they can make a quality system and quality games. As for the price, I know that Nintendo

makes quality games and I'm willing to pay its prices.

They are there

>>> Samuel E. Jones III

The games are there. While you are busy trying to find all of the secrets in standard-selling games such as Mario 64 or Pilotwings 64, Nintendo will come up with more hits.

Quantity AND Quality

>>> Sony Fan

Would you rather shell out \$250 for an N64 AND \$80+ for each of the three 'quality' games, or \$199 for a Playstation and 150 titles for \$40-\$50 each? Mario just can't compete to Tekken or Twisted Metal, even if he is in the third dimension as well.

1-2 Can Nintendo's three game launch library compete with such hits as Twisted Metal or Virtua Cop? Sony Fan isn't so sure...



Got something to say? We want to hear it. Send us an e-mail or drop a letter in the mail today. You may end up getting printed in a future installment of Network!

LET YOURSELF BE HEARD!

Don't just read about it, do it! Dial up **ULTRA Game Players Online** at the URL above and join in the fun. Click on the 'Talk' icon, and voice your opinions, trade tips, or just listen in.



Ask The Industry

PlayStation Problems

It's official! Sony PlayStations do suffer from overheating problems. I purchased my PlayStation on its debut September 9, 1995. Over the past month or so, I started having problems with the audio and video breaking up and at times the machine would lock up and not allow me to continue play without turning it off for a while. I contacted Sony's customer service department and the conversation was quite informative. The first words out of the customer service rep's mouth were 'The Sony PlayStation relies on air circulation for cooling. There are no cooling fans or other internal devices to provide cooling'. I was asked about where I keep my PlayStation? When I told the customer service rep that my PlayStation sits alone on a shelf in an open entertainment center, he told me I needed to take it out and place it in the open. I immediately thought 'What kind of bull is this? I must say I'm disappointed with Sony. I've always considered their products to be the best, but it appears that this standard of quality does not extend to the PlayStation. Luckily, the store I purchased my PlayStation from replaced it. This kept me from having to spend around \$150.00 to have my machine repaired since the 90 day warranty had expired. If Sony really believes in the quality of the PlayStation, I think they should offer a one year warranty. Don't get me wrong. I love my PlayStation (when it works properly). My only advice to anyone thinking of purchasing a PlayStation is... KEEP YOUR RECEIPT!!

You ask the questions, the experts answer

Steve Tonkor,
Atlanta, GA

Thank you for providing Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) the opportunity to respond to your consumer concerns. SCEA stands behind its products and services with professionalism, quality and integrity. Sometimes we find that a consumer's system is located in an area which impacts its ability to properly dissipate heat, such as sitting on carpeting or a sofa. In this case, we believe the symptoms they are having are caused by a buildup of heat within their PlayStation. Inside the instruction manual packet consumers receive when they purchase the PlayStation, there is an insert entitled Important Safeguards. Listed in that insert are a few tips regarding the installation of their system. If the instructions on this insert are not followed, the system may be more vulnerable to overheating, which could have something to do with the symptoms they may be experiencing. As to PlayStation's having other issues, we ask that the consumer call our toll-free consumer service line at 1-800-345-SONY (7669) so we can properly troubleshoot the system. Each PlayStation game console is trouble-shot on an individual basis.

— Andrew House, VP of Marketing

Faulty Games?

This problem has not been exclusive to Resident Evil or Capcom. The latest release of Resident Evil is shipping in the new Sony Jewel case packaging. If the CD comes off the spindle in the jewel case, there is no room for it to shift around or become scratched.

— Chris Jeinick,
Operations Manager

1 Steve Tonkor's got one hot complaint about his Sony PlayStation!
2 Sony's new jewel case just might be the answer to Jeffrey Richek's problem.



Web of Fire is pure vomit, so why do some reviewers still give it high marks? Jeremy Hill wants to know...

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 142

and you will see that there games available now that both look great and play great.

HE WANTS 'EM BOTH!

• Recently, I heard news that upset me — the Nintendo 64 can't play Super NES games! Nintendo should make the N64 downgradable. For first-time system buyers, they can experience awesome 16-bit games such as Donkey Kong Country 2, Super Mario RPG, etc. on the system, as well as its upcoming 64-bit hits! And for Super NES veterans like me, I won't need two systems hooked up to my TV at once! I don't want to abandon my 16-bit games even after the N64 comes out, and I don't want to have to hook two systems up to my TV at once!

Nintendo Fan
Hazelwood, MO

<<<Mike>>> Would you like to pay \$250 for an N64, or would you rather pay \$350? That's about how much Nintendo would have to charge if the N64 were to be downgradable. The N64 hardware is completely different than the Super NES, and the

only way to allow it to play those games would be to build a Super NES in the same cabinet. Sorry, you're just going to have to get used to having two systems hooked up to your TV. And is that really so bad?

THEY HAD IT COMING!

• You guys have a mag where bad games would be to build a Super NES in the same cabinet. Sorry, you're just going to have to get used to having two systems hooked up to your TV. And is that really so bad?

<<<CHRIS>>>

Trust us, there's nothing that we hate more than having to review a bad game. I mean, if you try out a game and don't like it, you can just put it down. But we still have to play it over and over, putting it through its paces to find out just how bad a game it really is. You can bet that after a game puts us through that much hell, we're gonna dish some back.

ASK THE BIG BOYS!

Do you have something to say about a particular game company? Say it to their face! Write up your question and send it to the usual address, c/o Ask The Industry.





YEARS AGO,
THEY TOOK
ALL YOUR
QUARTERS.



Now it's
**Payback
Time!**

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CLASSICS



As arcade machines, they inhaled all your pocket money. It's time to get even. You're **older** now, **faster**, **better**. Now you can **bring these classics home** and challenge them all over again. And no one will see if they still whup you.



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Visit your local retailer or call: **1-818-879-5728** FOR ORDERS ONLY

For game tips on our products: **1-800-370-HINT** (shown on screen)
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The Jaded Gamer



Maria, Schmaria! I'm getting so fed up with that little Italian plumber that every time he blurts out 'Hey, it's me, Mario!' my stomach blurts out something that tastes like two-day-old pepperoni pizza — and I don't eat pepperoni pizza!!

Yeah, yeah... I can hear you all asking 'What's the matter, JG? Can't quite beat that Snowman leaver? Well, that's not it at all. And I'm sure that, some day, I'll beat that level easily. But what really bugs me about the little guy in the red cap is that no matter how many times he comes out with a new game, it's always the same. He's always running around, gathering up all the moonlets. The Mario I remember versus the money-hungry, BMW-driving Mario he is today.

When I first saw Mario, he was a young, idealistic upstart. All he really cared was saving his high school sweetheart from the evil clutches of that many monkey. Those were the days! You'd see Mario everywhere... jumping over flaming barrels, clinging precariously to dangling ladders, and doing it all in the name of love.

I thought to myself, 'Now there goes a young man with his priorities set right!' But somehow, Mario changed...

Gone is the young plumber with a weakness for hammers. All that's left is a greedy Goomba.

The Jaded Gamer appears courtesy of the Brisbane Home For The Twisted And Bitter. JG's views do not reflect reality in any sense of the word. His wardrobe is provided by whoever makes those lockable, canvas tuxedos.

gathering up every coin he can find. Mario may have a heart of gold, but now I know how it got that way.

Now the little wiseguy is back, on the Nintendo 64, of all things. And just what does this do for Mario? Well, I'm here to tell ya that the Mario Mafia has spared no expense to make the Little Don look great. Really great.

You want floating cameras? The game's got the best that Mob money can buy. You can change the view from 'up close and personal' to an angle any lone gunman on a grassy knoll would appreciate. Why go through all the trouble of installing a state of the art camera system like this? It's simple — to

keep an eye out for the law! I'm sure the FBI has long been wondering about Mario's apparently endless wealth and his nonexistent means of support.

With a great camera setup like he's got, Mario would always know when the law was on. So, when the law comes snooping, Mario just stands around, whistling. As soon as the Feds leave, WHAM! It's back to gathering up all his ill-gotten booty!

'Oh, Mario could never be associated with the Mob!', you say. 'He's never taken any of 'A Ride' or given anyone a 'Cement Overcoat!' ARE YOU BLIND? Just what do you think happened to all those poor, defenseless Koopas? There they are, just minding their own business, when along comes Mario, and before you can say 'Hey, well, don't kill me!', another Koopa is sleeping with the fishes.

And another thing: as if grabbing all the gold and bumping off people who get in his way wasn't enough, I'll let you in on another secret — MARIO CHEATS! You heard me! He's never won a race fairly in his life! Just ask the Penguin, or the Snowman; they'll tell you! THOSE RACES WERE FIXED!!!

So you should think twice before you plunk down your hard earned dough for Mario's latest adventure. Sure, it'll be fun, and sure, you'll have a great time, but so will the Mario Mafia. They'll laugh all the way to the bank!

1 Am early, 20 Mario takes to the skies! Notice the nondescript sky and flat landscape.
2 And here's Mario the way we all saw him in our dreams; as real as you and me!



What happened to the original WaveRace? And could the impending F-Zero 64 have anything to do with its disappearance? Mellon91ca wants to know...

TOUGH QUESTIONS

• I'd like to start out by saying that your coverage of the E³ Show was excellent. I am a proud Saturn owner who has considered selling it to buy the Nintendo 64, but on the other hand, I want to keep it because some future Sega titles look promising. By answering these questions you could help me make a better decision:

[1] You say that Sega's Model 3 board is 'the most powerful arcade board of all time' and the Nintendo 64 is 'the most powerful home videogame system'. Which one looks to be better in terms of graphics and speed? Are they at all similar? Maybe almost equal?

[2] I have seen the progression of WaveRace 64 in your magazine for the past couple of months and my question is, did Nintendo somehow turn the 'old' WaveRace 64 into F-Zero 2 and develop the 'new' WaveRace 64 from scratch?

[3] Taking everything into consideration (i.e. hardware, software, marketing, third-party development, etc.), which system do you think will be the most dominant in the next year or so: Nintendo 64, Saturn,

PlayStation, or 3DO/M2?

[4] Are you planning on buying a Nintendo 64?

I understand that these are very hard questions and I know you have a very busy schedule, but you guys are the videogame experts and I'm counting on you. Take your time answering them and e-mail me back whenever you get a chance. Mellon91ca@aol.com

<<[Mike]>> [1] The Model 3 arcade board is more powerful than several N64s put together. See, coin-op manufacturers have few limitations, while home systems have to keep a low price point. We won't see a home console as powerful as the Model 3 board for a long, long time.

[2] From the rumors we've been hearing, that is exactly right. F-Zero 64 won't be on water, but other than that it looks identical to the early version of WaveRace 64.

[3] With the marketing muscle of Sony, Sega's arcade hits, and the amazing power of the N64, it's going to be a real tight race without any one single dominant company. I see Sony leading the race for now because of the number of games and marketing dollars.

[4] Buy a videogame system? Are you





Despite its violent overtones, girls dig *Resident Evil*. But what other good female games are there? Laurel Hill wants to know...

crazy? Those things cost too much money! Besides, we get 'em all for free! I love my job.

GAMER GAL!

• I'm a new subscriber and female. Also, I'm in the 'over 30 years old range' — actually, 35. Anyway, I'm wondering why I'm in such a minority. There are no readers (and players, for that matter) my age and sex. I mean, I think it's great to sit and play *Resident Evil* (my fave at the moment) and other adventure games, on my PlayStation. I know a few men my age that play, but no women. C'mon gals! Get into it! I've also just ordered *Kings Field* through an ad in your mag — any opinions would be appreciated. PS — Mike is totally hot!
Laurel Hill
New Orleans, LA

«Mike» It's great to hear that we have some older (not old, just 'more mature') female gamers out there. I personally think that many women would enjoy games like *Resident Evil*, but they just aren't exposed to them. I mean, anything's got to be more entertaining

than *Ricki Lake* (I know, bad joke!). As for King's Field, I think you'll really enjoy it. It's a deep adventure that really gets you exploring.

GAMES FOR GIRLS

• Simple question — can you suggest any games that a female would be interested in playing? All games, whether action, adventures or videos, seem to cater only to the male gender. I love playing games, too. Do you have any suggestions?
TPumph6860@aol.com

«Mike» It's true that videogames are developed and marketed towards males, because that's who buys the games for the most part. Some feeble sexist efforts, like the Barbie game, were an insult to female gamers. My suggestion is to check out games like *Nights*, *Mario*, *Crash*, and RPGs which focus less on testosterone-filled explosions and more on good, solid gameplay. In the end, a good game is a good game and should be capable of entertaining both males and females.

Fan Site of the month

Dustin's Sega Saturn Page

<http://www.erols.com/dustin/saturn/saturn.html/>

Dustin's Sega Saturn Page was a hands-down pick by the *ULTRA GAME PLAYERS* staff for our first monthly look at fan-created videogame web sites. The frequently-updated site features timely, accurate, and comprehensive information on Saturn games without inundating visitors with fancy features that take forever to download.

Most of the information on the site is gathered from other internet sources or videogame print magazines, but on occasion, Dustin has been known to get stuff before the majority of his "professional" competition does. His previews feature a nice variety of screen shots, and the entirely text-based reviews are well written, with well-balanced

opinions. Round out the site with an extensive collection of cheats and links to other sites and Dustin's Sega Saturn Page offers superior content in a straight forward and user-friendly manner. Everyone be sure to check it out, and let Dustin know what a great job he's doing!



Dustin's Sega Saturn Page emphasizes content over elaborate design characteristics.



News content doesn't go into too much detail, but it is timely and concise.



Information on games in development is surprisingly plentiful.



Reviews are completely text-based but are well written, thorough, and accurate.



Dustin's cheats section for the Saturn is one of the better ones out there.

SURFED ANY GOOD WEB SITES LATELY?

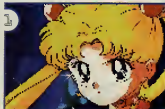
Drop us an e-mail with the URL and let us check it out for ourselves. If we feel that its creator has gone above and beyond the call of duty, we'll feature the page in a future issue!

1-2 Dustin's clean layouts and large screen shots really reflect the time and effort he puts into his website!

THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

• Here is a serious issue for the magazine. If you are not already aware, an extremely good anime show, *Sailor Moon*, is going to be cancelled! The only group working to stop this is the Save Our Sailors (S.O.S.) group at <http://looney.physics.sunysb.edu/~daffy/sos>. Unfortunately, right now we don't have much publicity. So please, as a favor to one of your dedicated subscribers, print this letter in the mag or put something on your website or something! This show can't die! The Amazing Maxout fgarber@shore.net

<<<Chris>>> To tell the truth, I'm usually at work before this show comes on in my area. Still, you've gotta appreciate a show based on



1 Sailor Moon — high school honor student, super-hero. 2 Grop by the S.O.S. (Save Our Sailors) website at <http://looney.physics.sunysb.edu/~daffy/sos> and lend a hand.

1-2 Tekken 2 just happens to be Sean Stover's favorite game, and who can blame him? Just check out those beautiful screen shots! Of course, these pics don't make us want to go out and start making our own hats...

high school girls who take time off from homework to save the world! All of you anime fans out there, let yourself be heard!

CAR JACKER

• First, I want to say that *Game Players* magazine is the best game magazine of all times. Second, I have some questions for you:

[1] In the June 1996 issue I saw a game in your previews section called *Grand Theft Auto* for the Saturn. Do you know the release date and the price of it?

[2] Do you know any codes for *Grand Theft Auto*? For instance, the secret that lets you stop at a donut shop, 'Going on the take', or any other hidden tricks? If so, will you give them to me?

[3] Do you have any scenes for *GTA (Grand Theft Auto)*? (Even if they don't show much).

[4] Is the Saturn ever going to have *Twisted Metal*? If so, when?

[5] Do you have any codes for *Destruction Derby* for the Saturn? Justin Sutton
Fort Worth, TX

<<<Mike>>> [1] That game has been pushed back by BMG, and may not come out at all in the US. As soon as we hear an update we'll be sure to let you know.

[2] No, but we do have some nice fictional codes for the in-house BoboSoft production of *Rogue Cop*.

[3] Yes, I've got a scene for you, 'The game isn't coming out anytime soon, if at all'!

[4] No, *Twisted Metal* is a Sony first-party game that isn't coming to the Saturn.

[5] Read the codes section. This is the letters section, where we answer questions. This isn't the code line.

WORLD ADDRESS

• What is wrong on the World Wide Web? I tried to open up your address (www.gameplayers.com) and the thing just showed me the words 'Game Players'. What happened? I've been trying to get the tips and old reviews that I've been



Will BMG's *Grand Theft Auto* ever be made, or is it doomed to production limbo? 'Quick-Start' Sutton wants to know...

wanting to see, and I get this! I also tried your other address that was in a 1995 issue, (www.gameplayers.com/gp) and that just booted up a file with pictures and a parent directory. Print this in your next issue so I can see your site. PS — Forget the cards saying 'We're too busy now', OK? You print other people's, but not mine.
Joshua Martz
Fl. Carson, CO

<<<ROGER>>> Just like your favorite videogame mag, the *Game Players* web site has gone ULTRA too. The site had been under a major redesign and re-launched on July 4. If you haven't already visited the redesigned site, stop by and take a peek at all the cool stuff. The address is still www.gameplayers.com, or we can also be reached at www.ultragg.com. I like to describe the experience as '100% hyper-exciting visual'.

TEKKEN IT TO THE LIMIT

• I really love fighting games, and I believe that *Tekken* is the best fighter ever invented. I just go to the arcade to kick everybody's butt at *Tekken 2*, and let me just say that

I have yet to find someone that can beat me in a match. I have the first one for my PlayStation and I've finished it with Heihachi in UltraHard mode in 2'36"58, and I can't wait until *Tekken 2* is out for PlayStation. My main reason to write this letter isn't to gloat, but to ask you dudes if you know if there is going to be a *Tekken 3* and if so, when it is hitting the arcades. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and please print it and reply. Keep up the good work! PS. — You can tell who I am when you see me in the arcade with my home made *Tekken* hat on.
Sean Stover
Chesaning, MI

<<<Bill>>> Well, Sean, I don't want you to think we're being alarmed or anything, but you seem to be a little obsessed with *Tekken*. I'm also sure that gloating was the last thing on your mind, even though your exploits take up a good two-thirds of your letter. You'll be pleased to know that *Tekken 3* is now in development, but we're not sure when the game will make it to the arcades. But the part of your letter that really worries us is the bit about the 'home made *Tekken* hat'. Why didn't you just get a regular store-bought one, like the rest of us?



LETTERS

LE FREAK!

* Let me start by saying your magazine is the best. I'm a videogame freak. I own a Sega Saturn, and I'm hooked on it. I also have a couple of questions:

- [1] What is the story on Donovan's little girl on *Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge*?
- [2] I have not seen it, but I heard she is a playable character, is she?
- [3] Is *Fighting Vipers* coming to the Sega Saturn?
- [4] What's up with this *Fighting Sonic* game I've heard about? Well, that's it for me. Keep up the good work, guys.

Fred Belone

Somewhere on the High Seas

<<<ROSER>>> [1] The little girl's name is Anita and Donovan is fighting so that she will regain the ability to feel emotions. But in his quest to save Anita's soul, Donovan faces the prospect of becoming a Dark



1 Nothing's more heroic than risking your life so that a little girl can smile again.
2 So smile, dammit! SMILE!

1 Mike Kovach supports Sony's tough stance on its third-party developers, but would he still feel the same if Worms hadn't made the cut?
2 Mike is also a big fan of Sega games, except when the game in question happens to be *Time Killers*. Our Roger Burchill indelicately agrees!

Stalker himself.

[2] It may be possible to fight as Anita, but since I've heard nothing about this rumor previously, I'd say that it is extremely improbable.

[3] We just received an early version of *Fighting Vipers* for Saturn and have been unable to put the controllers down. Looks like another winner for Sega.

[4] *Sonic Fighters* is being considered for release in the US, but may be squeezed out if Sega feels that *Virtua Fighter Kids* has enough cute quotient to satisfy the market. My advice is to bug the hell out of Sega to bring over *Sonic Fighters*. VF Kids is basically another *Virtua Fighter 2*, but *Sonic Fighters* is blue butt-kickin' goodness.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

* I'm 21 years old, currently in the military and going to college. I love playing videogames and would like to know what I should major in, or who I should threaten to get where you're at. Please send me a letter. I'd prefer as little competition as possible. I wouldn't want to have to hurt somebody. PS — I just turned 21 today!
PFC McQuillan, William P.
Ft. Hood, TX

<<<BILL>>> Attention SHUN! Front and center, Private McQuillan! What are you doing to my beloved magazine? Threaten somebody? Hurt somebody? What is your major malfunction, Private? Choke yourself! Choke yourself!!! Seriously, though, I believe that Journalism, English, and Computer Science classes would be the courses to study. NOW DROP AND GIVE ME 20!

THE FIX IS IN!!!

* Chris! Big Chris! The Mario Man! You just gotta do the review for *Super Mario 64*, so I can see the rating this game deserves: 100%. You just couldn't give ol' Mario a worse rating than that, could you, man? But if you can't do the rating for *Mario 64*, at least don't let Roger, the Nintendo Hater, do it. He'd probably grade down the



Fighting Vipers, the latest Sega arcade port to Saturn, has already won over Fred Belone...

graphics and music just for being too 'cutey'.
VTRIPSV@aol.com

<<<ROSER>>> Well, since we're ULTRA GAME PLAYERS now, we had to toss out the 'Box', which means, of course, that I was unable to dispose of Mr. Slate when this month's reviews were being assigned. The resulting travesty of our rating system is available for your perusal on Pgs. 86 & 87. Okay, in all probability, it is the greatest game ever, but I'll reserve my comments on the issue of a perfect score since I've got a serious hankering to hoard some gold coins and rescue a princess.

MORTAL KOMMENTS

* You guys run a great magazine and I would just like to pitch in a few comments:

- [1] Sony made a good move by stiffening up on its third-party games. If you have a game like *Tekken* (PlayStation) or *Virtua Fighter 2* (Saturn), why would you want to put out something that doesn't compare to those games?
- [2] Where are all of Sega's preview games? Issue number 86's Previews section was practically all PlayStation games.
- [3] I am a big supporter of Sega, but what gives them the right to

produce the biggest piece of crap on the market, *Time Killers*? I am ashamed to say that I'm pretty sure that's the lowest rating ever for a game in this magazine!

[4] For all you *Mortal Kombat* fans out there, get over it. MK2 was the only good one.
Mike Kovach
Manor, PA

<<<ROSER>>> [1] I'm all for more quality control, but the only thing that makes me worry is who's making the decisions? A great game like *Worms* almost didn't make it out on the PlayStation because of Sony's concerns about its 2D gameplay. There's something to be said for leaving the ultimate decision of a game's worth to the consumer.

[2] Don't worry, there are plenty of Saturn games coming. Coverage is totally dependent on the information available at press time. Issue 86 was just a month when there was more info available on PlayStation games.
[3] Companies do need to show some responsibility in the titles they release. These are desperate times for Genesis titles, but that's no excuse for pulling out any rotting thing in the closet.
[4] I have just two words regarding the MK series: 'FINISH IT!'



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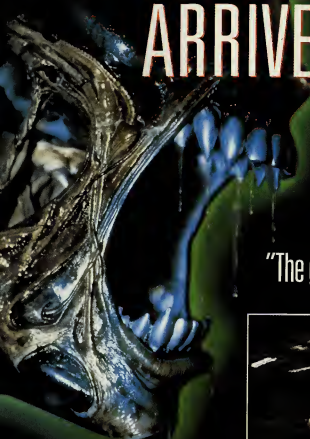
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